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 to stand against the wiles of the Devil. Eph. 6. ver. 11.
 Through god we shall do valiantly for he it is that
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The Spiritual Combat :

OR, THE
Christian Pilgrim

IN HIS
Spiritual Conflict and Conquest.

By John de Castaniza.

*Translated from the French, with some
Additions.*

Revised and Recommended by the Re-
verend RICHARD LUCAS, D. D.
Rector of St. Katharin Coleman-street.

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THE SPIRITUAL COMRADE:

OR THE

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IN HIS

SPIRITUAL JOURNEY AND COMRADE

BY JOHN C. COLEMAN

Translated from the French with John
Coleman

Revised and Accompanied by the Rev.
J. C. RICHARDSON, D.D.
Rector of St. James' Church, New York

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TO THE
TRANSLATOR.

S I R,

I Have perused the Book you sent me and your Translation; and here I give you, as you desire, my Sense on both. Your Translation is easy and natural, and such as, I think, has done the Author no wrong. The Book itself is writ with a Spirit of true Piety, and in a little Compass and a very good Order, contains a great many excellent Directions for the Con-

A 3 quest

quest of all inordinate
Appetites, and the at-
taining a true Confor-
mity to the Divine
Will: I heartily wish
it may meet with the
Success you aim at.
There are some few
Places in it which I
have marked that are
liable to be mistaken
by a Common Reader,
to which you must
give a more easy and
intelligible Turn. I
am

Your Affectionate Friend,

Ri. Lucas.

P R E

P R E F A C E.

TO you dear Christian Reader, who are so happy as to have left the beaten Road of Destruction, and are entred into the true way of Life, who have set your Affections upon things above, and are therefore seriously bent upon purchasing those Pleasures that are there, whatever it may cost you ; to you I present this little Treatise, wherein you have excellent Instructions for guiding you in the true way to that Heavenly Country: You have here put into your hand very proper Weapons for defending your self, or offending the Enemies you are like to meet with in the way ; you have here drawn out before you their several Fcits and Snares, that you may be prepared before-hand, either to avoid 'em or valiantly to break through them : In fine, you have here pointed out to you some Windings and Turnings in your Road which many for want of knowing or being inform'd of, have taken a wrong Path, that has led them upon dangerous Precipices, to the ruin of their Souls and their everlasting Concerns : So that if you will walk on warily,

The Preface.

rily, and follow with Discretion the Directions here given, you may hope, in time with safety, (tho' not without some Difficulty) to climb up the high Mountain of Perfection, on the top whereof you will be refreshed with the sweet Influences and Breathings of the Holy Ghost, to Comfort you after the Labours, Toyls and Fatigues of your Journey.

There are many Books wherein this divine Wisdom is more largely taught; but the whole Doctrin thereof being so briefly and familiarly comprised in this little Book, I thought it might be serviceable to such as want either Leisure or Capacity to look over bigger Volumes.

This, with the desire of some Friends, put me upon Translating or Reviving this little Treatise, whereby I hope I have done the Author no wrong in any material part, tho' I have taken the Liberty of leaving out or altering some few places that might otherwise perhaps have prejudiced a well minded Reader.

This Book being written with such a Spirit of Piety, hath met with a general Approbation and Esteem where-
ever

The Preface.

ever it cameto be known, insomuch that there have been many Editions of it in most of the European Languages. The Author whereof is generally thought to be one Juan de Castaniza a devout Spaniard, who lived about a hundred Years since.

There were some Things added by other pious Men, who in the last of our English Editions, took the pains to clear up and explain several places in the Text, which favouring much of the same sincere Spirit of Devotion, I have here made use of for your benefit, and transferred hither by way of Explication, whatsoever seemed Pertinent or conducing to the Illustration of the Author, cloathing their Sense in a more modern Dress, tho' with as little alteration as possible: However, I have endeavoured to keep the Original entire, by marking in the Margin where the Explication of any part begins.

What remains, but that you set your self seriously to the Practise of the Doctrin herein contained? Which will be the way for you to reap the Benefit, and to make me some amends for the pains I have taken. T H E

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T H E

Spiritual Combat.

C H A P. I.

*Wherein Christian Perfection
consists, and of Four Means
necessary to obtain it.*

IF you seriously desire (my The Importance of this Knowledge.
dearly Beloved) to attain to
those high Degrees of Per-
fection that the Christian Religion
calls you to, which is, to be so
united to God, as to become one
Spirit with him, (it being also the
most profitable Employment, and
most excellent and divine Enter-
prize imaginable) It will be ne-
cessary for you in the first place, to
know wherein true Perfection, or
a spiritual Life consists; because

B many

Some place
Perfection in
Austerities.

Others in
saying over
many Pray-
ers.

Others in re-
servedness &
silence.

All which
are good
means, but
not directly
tending to
Perfection.

many for want of this necessary Consideration, have placed it in leading an austere Life, in great Mortifications of the Body, in much Fasting, Watching, and the like rigorous Exercises; others, especially Women, think this Perfection consists in the Repetition and daily Recital of many Prayers, in hearing many Sermons, and frequenting the Church, and the Sacraments, and many also of them, that are accounted good and religious persons, persuade themselves, that all they have to do is to be silent and reserved, and to live at home retired, and at quiet in a sober and regular manner. Thus some one way, some another, tend to their desired Perfection, but are all far short of it, and are deceived in the right way leading to it; for tho' these several Employments may be sometimes the means to obtain the true Spirit of Perfection, and sometimes also the Fruit of the same Spirit, yet we must not say that in them alone Christian Perfection, or a Spiritual

tual Life consists. Tis true, the discreet use of them is doubtless a powerful means to obtain the Grace of the Holy Ghost, to fortify us against our natural Weaknesses and Infirmities, to shield, and to arm us against the Deceits and Assaults of our common Enemy, and finally to perform our practices of Piety with more sweetness and alacrity (especially whilst we are Novices in this spiritual Conflict.) They are also the Fruit of the same Spirit in those that are well experienced and enlightened persons, who therefore use their Body hardly, as well because it has been instrumental in offending their Creator, as to keep it in subjection for the future; who love silence, and live in solitude, to shun all Occasions of Sin, and to attend their Heavenly Meditations with more Quiet and Tranquility, being thereby disintangled from the Snares and Impediments of the World; who are devout and diligent observers of the publick Service, are forward in Works of

Charity, frequently in Prayer, and at the holy Communion, to give the more Glory to his Divine Majesty, and to unite themselves more closely to him by the Bonds of Love.

They that rest in these lower exercises are in great danger.

But as for those that rest here, and place their End in these outward Exercises, the very same practices may be sometimes the Occasion of their Fall, and greater Mischief to them, than open and notorious Sins; and this not through default of the Exercises themselves, which are truly good, and warranted by the practice and Example of many holy Persons; but because they who use them, are so wholly intent upon the outward performance of them, that they leave their interiour, abandoned to the Power of their corrupt Affections, and the hidden Snares of the Devil; who seeing them so far short of the right way, not only suffers them quietly to continue these Exercises that they find so much sweetness and satisfaction in, but raises their
vain

The Spiritual Combat.

5

vain Imaginations to think they are even at the Gates of Paradise. Such is the vain persuasion of some, and others are sometimes so taken up with their Meditation of profound, curious and agreeable Matters, that they conceit themselves to have got above the World, and all Creatures, and rapt up into the third Heaven.

But how dangerously all such Souls are deceived, in how many Errors they are intangled, and how far they are strayed from the right way of perfection, will easily appear by the rest of their Actions; for they are commonly very singular and conceited, full of bitterness, severe and curious Censurers of their Neighbours Lives and Conversations, and prone to murmur at their proceedings; and if you go about to thwart them in their Opinions, and admonish them of their Errors, or never so little hinder them from their accustomed Exercises, (which are strongly imprinted in their Imaginations) you shall presently

as may appear by the rest of their Actions.

The Spiritual Combat.

perceive them strangely altered from their Calmness, and fall into Passions and extream Unquietness.

Especially
want of Re-
signation in
time of Af-
fliction.

And if it please God (in order to give them a true Knowledge of their State) to send or permit any Affliction, Sickness, or Persecution to befall them, (which never come but by his special Providence, and are often for the Tryal of his Servants Sincerity) how soon may you discover the false Foundations they build upon? how corrupt is their inward Man? and how full of secret Pride? for they refuse to resign their Wills, and to humble their Hearts under God's powerful Hand, in the various Changes of Prosperity and Adversity. They think it hard to follow the Example of the humble suffering Son of God, to subject themselves to their fellow Creatures, and take their seeming Enemies to be (what they truly are) their dearest Friends; not considering that it is God's infinite Goodness that sends them all these

Ad-

Adversities, as Promoters of their perfection, and Helpers in the Reformation of their unmortified passions; which is an evident sign that such persons are in a very dangerous State. For the Eyes of their Souls being dazled, and corrupted by gazing upon these outward good Actions of theirs, they arrogate to themselves, I know not what Degrees of perfection; and from thence lifting themselves up with pride, they think they have a right to judge and condemn the Actions of others; nor is there any hopes of their being recalled or cured, unless God himself by an extraordinary Grace, and particular interposing of his Goodness, strikes powerfully upon their Hearts, and dissipates the Darkness of their Minds with the Divine Rays of his gracious Light, letting them see their Danger, that they may seek a Remedy; there being more likelihood of reclaiming a great and notorious Sinner, than he whose Defects are covered to him-

The Spiritual Combat.

self under the appearance of Vertue and Piety.

True Perfection therefore consists in the Knowledge of God & our selves,

in the love of God, and hatred of our selves, in resignation to the Will of God, and denying our own.

all which, Christ has taught us by Word and Example.

Thus then it is manifest that true Christian Perfection consists not in the aforesaid practices and persuasions; you are to know therefore that it consists only in the true Knowledge of God's Goodness, and Greatness, and of our own Baseness, Misery, and Nothingness, and of the proneness and Inclination of our Nature to all manner of Wickedness. Also in the hatred of our selves, and the Love of God: And lastly, in the absolute denying of our own Will, and intire Resignation of it to the Divine Will and Pleasure: That is, that we submit our selves not only to Almighty God, but even to all Creatures for his sake, and for no other end than to please his Divine Majesty: and the more, since he deserves to be served and honoured, praised and glorified after the most perfect manner:

This is the Self denyal which Christ our Saviour requires of us; this

this is the Obedience to which he invites and directs his faithful followers, both by his Words and Example; This is the Cross which his Servants are to take up, following the steps of their Saviour. This is that pure and true Charity which our Lord so frequently recommended to the whole World, and especially to his Disciples, as his particular Friends and Children, after his last Supper.

And because at the same time that you aspire to this high Degree of Perfection, you must do Violence to your self, and think generously of overcoming the least Motions of your own perverse Will, and irregular Affections; you must prepare your self for the Fight with all Watchfulness and Courage; For the Crown of so great a Victory, is only for those that have fought valiantly.

For as this Combat is the greatest, and full of Difficulty, so is the ensuing Victory the most glorious to our selves, and the most grateful to God of any other; in so

And we must also do it if we mean to be victorious.

Nor is there any thing more glorious to our selves, or more grateful to God.

much, as if you overcome, mortifie, and root out your own inordinate and unruly Affections, you offer up to God a more agreeable Sacrifice, than if (neglecting this) you fast beyond the Austerity of the strictest Anchorites, or convert Thousands of Infidels and Sinners to the Faith of Christ. For though the Conversion of Souls be in it self more dear to God than the renouncing of our own Wills in small matters; yet it is your part to will and do that chiefly and most carefully which he most strictly requires of you. And this is a certain Truth, that the serious Mortification of your Passions is more agreeable to him, than if letting these grow in your Heart, you should serve him in the highest and holiest Employment.

But to obtain it, we must provide four necessary Weapons.

And thus it being shewn wherein Christian Perfection consists, and that to obtain it, you must engage your self in a cruel and continual War, if you intend to be a Conqueror, it behoves you like a stout Chri

Christian Champion to provide your self with four things, being so many safe and necessary Weapons, in order to carry away the Palm and remain victorious in this spiritual Combat ; which are these, 1. Diffidence of your self. 2. Confidence in God. 3. Spiritual Exercise. 4. Prayer. Of all which, I shall by God's Assistance now treat particularly in their proper Order.

C H A P. II.

Of the Diffidence or Distrust of our selves.

THIS Diffidence of your self, may be obtained three several ways ; the first is by seriously considering and deeply acknowledging your own Baseness and Misery, and that of your Self, you cannot do the least good thing.

2. The second way to get this Self-Distrust, is to demand it of God (whose gracious Gift it is) with humble and earnest prayers ; and to

Distrust of our selves which is gotten first by a deep Sense of our Misery.

2. By Prayer.

to prevail in your Request you ought first to yield and acknowledge that you truly want it, and that of your Self you can never attain it. And thus sensible of your Poverty present your Prayer with a constant Faith and courageous Hope, that his Divine Goodness will grant your Desire, for if you present your self often before him after this manner, and expect with perseverance the fulfilling your Petition, be confident it will sooner or later be granted you.

3. By often reflecting up
our own
weakness.

This Self
knowledge is
very necessary
to be learned.

3. The third is, That as oft as you happen to fall into Sin, you immediately turn the Eye of your Mind upon your own Baseness, Misery, and Inability to do any thing that is good ; for until this be truly known, and sincerely acknowledged by you, never hope to be secure from falling. Whosoever therefore Aspires to a blessed Union with God, must first study this necessary Lesson of Self knowledge, which the Divine Mercy gives commonly to the Proud and Presumptuous, by permitting them

to

to fall into some notorious Sins; by which they may be forced to confess their Frailty and Impotency, and according as their Pride is greater or less, so their fall is commonly more or less grievous.

Wherefore presently after you have fallen, enter speedily into your Self by an humble Reflection upon your own Vileness, beg constantly and importunately of God the true and inward Light of his Spirit to see your own Frailty, and Infirmary, and to keep you from falling into greater Faults, for the future.

This distrust of your self is so necessary for you in this Combat, that without it you cannot only never hope to obtain the Conquest over your Enemies, but not so much as to suppress the least of your Passions or Imperfections: You are therefore seriously and frequently to reflect upon the Corruption of your natural Inclinations, which is so often apt to make you conceive a good Opinion of your Self and your own Actions,

And we must be careful to rise speedily after our fall.

Explanation.
The great necessity of this distrust in our own strength.

is enforced from the corruption of our Nature,

And the
weakness
thereof

And by con-
sidering how
pleasing to
God this ac-
knowledg-
ment is, and
how Pre-
sumption dis-
pleases him.

You are
therefore to
study well
this funda-
mental Les-
son.

Actions, and to perswade your self that you are something, when as indeed you are nothing. Consider further the Vanity and Presumption of such Self-conceits, and the Weakness of your own Forces, and how displeasing the one is to the Divine Majesty, and how pleasing the other; for God loves a free Confession of our Frailty, and a real Acknowledgment of our Dependance upon his Power and Providence, from whose Bounty and Benignity all Grace and Goodness is derived into our Souls; since being left to our selves, we can neither think nor act any thing which hath the least value.

Wherefore study well this first and fundamental Lesson, being a matter of very high Importance, and of God's own Working, which he teacheth his dear Friends, sometimes by his heavenly Inspirations, other times by permitting them to fall grievously, and to be tempted violently, and many other ways, as he knows best for them. And be sure to make serious use of the
three

three ways here proposed: by the due performance and practice whereof, and your faithful Concurrence with God's Grace, which will never be wanting to your Endeavours, you may confidently hope to attain it.

CHAP. III.

Of Confidence in God.

BUT tho' Distrust of your self (as we have shewed) be very necessary in this Combat, yet if you have no other Weapon but that you must expect either to fly the Field, or be soon overcome. Wherefore in the next place, imploy your Diligence in getting an entire Confidence in God, hoping, and begging from him his continual Assistance, and all Good whatsoever; in obtaining whereof, make use also of these three means.

2. Confidence in God, which is obtained

First, you must beg it fervently and humbly of the Divine Majesty.

1. By Prayer

Se-

By consider-
ing the Di-
vine Power,
Wisdom, and
Goodness, by
which he
can, knows
how, and is
willing to
help.

Secondly, you are by the Light of Faith to contemplate and consider his wonderful Power, and his infinite Goodness, to whom nothing is either impossible or difficult and that his Goodness which has no Bounds, is always readily disposed by an inexpressible desire to give you every Hour, and every Moment, all things necessary for a Spiritual Life, and towards gaining an entire Victory over your Enemies: and indeed can it be possible that this Divine Shepherd, who for three and thirty Years so carefully run after his strayed Sheep, and that with such Cries, and through Ways so rough, and thorny, that it cost him no less a Price than his own Blood, and the loss of his Life! Can it be possible, I say, now that he should turn away his Eyes of Compassion from one that follows him, cries and calls after him, that he should not hear her now, and remember his own Promise, and lay her upon his sacred Shoulders, rejoicing with the Heavenly Citizens for her

eternam
in
-do si dicitur
benignit

1. By Father

her happy Return; or who can imagin that our loving Lord God, who so much desires to enter into our Hearts, and make his abode in our Souls; and to this end is always knocking for admittance, that he may communicate to us the Heavenly Treasures of his Grace, should then keep at a distance, when we open to him our Hearts, or should refuse his Presence, when we humbly and heartily invite him in.

The third means to obtain this Confidence in God, is to reflect often upon the infallible truths, that are taught us in so many places of the Holy Scriptures, where it is frequently shewed us, that whosoever placeth all his Trust and Confidence in God shall never be confounded.

3. By Meditating upon the holy Scriptures.

To these we may add another way to get this Distrust of our selves, and Confidence in God, which is, when there is an Occasion proffered you of doing any thing, before you set about it, First make Reflection upon your

Another means is by thinking on our own Frailty and Gods Omnipotency in the beginning of each Action.

own

own Fraikty, and the Power and Goodness of God, and after that you may determine to execute it; But if you observe not this Method in the beginning of any Action, you will find your self oftentimes much deceived, even when you think you have undertaken them in the best manner; for Pride and Presumption being so inherent in our nature, it is impossible we can act in Virtue of this Diffidence of our selves, and Confidence in God, if we do not well consider our Actions, before we determine to do them; and take heed you be not mistaken in thinking you have attained this Diffidence of your self and Confidence in God when you are far short of it; which you may easily perceive by the remaining Motions of the Mind that your frequent fallings into Sin produce in you: For if these Relapses make you sad and unquiet, and in a manner despair of making a spiritual Progress, it is to be feared that you have too much Confidence in your self, and little in God's

Whereby we
shall not be
foolishly de-
jected at our
frequent fail-
ings.

God's Goodness; so that if your Sadness and Despair be great, you have reason to think that you have a great deal of Confidence in your own Strength; and little Faith in God; whereas he that has a true Distrust of himself, and a perfect Confidence in God, does not much wonder at his own Frailty, nor is vainly dejected at his frequent Fallings, knowing them the Effect of his own Weakness, and therefore it hinders not the Confidence he ought to have in God's Goodness; on the contrary, it makes him enter into the greater distrust of himself, and a more firm Confidence in his Divine Bounty, conceiving indeed a holy Anger against himself for his Sin, and a hearty and humble Sorrow for offending his Creator, yet so, that with a new enkindled Zeal, and greater Courage than before, he continues the Design he has begun, and resolves to pursue his Enemies even to Death.

As we can promise to our selves nothing but Fallings and Fallings, be-

disorder
shows your
disease

Explanation.
By Gods assistance we
can do all
things.

because of our selves we are able to do nothing; so also we may certainly promise to our selves from our God, an entire Victory over all our Enemies, if we arm our Hearts with a lively Confidence in his Divine Majesty.

Wherein
many are de-
ceived

By reason of
their Pride
and Presump-
tion in their
own strength

But many deceive themselves in supposing that the Pusillanimity and Disquiet that follows upon the falling into Defects, is an effect of Vertue; because it is accompanied with Displeasure for their Fault, whereas indeed it commonly springs from Pride, and Presumption, and is founded in Self-Confidence, and conceit in their own strength, which they too much relying upon, find by the woful Experience of their Fall, that they are truly weak, and really nothing, and thereupon they become troubled and astonished as at a new thing, and so begin to despair and lose Heart, seeing that Prop which sustained their vain Confidence fallen down to the Ground.

But this seldom befalls those that

that are truly humble; for they confiding in God alone, presuming nothing of themselves, when they chance to fall into any Fault, feel indeed a true Grief in their Souls, but are neither disquieted, nor astonished, seeing clearly (by the Light of Truth) that this proceeds from their own Misery and Frailty.

CHAP. IV.

Of continual Exercise; and first that the Understanding is carefully to be kept from Ignorance and Curiosity.

IT has been shewed how much this Distrust of our selves, and Trust in God's Goodness, helps us on in our Spiritual Conflict; but they alone are yet insufficient to gain the Victory, and preserve us from Relapses; and therefore we must add to these continual Exercise, which is the third thing we have proposed to treat of, and this chiefly consists in a right use of

The 3d. Weapon is continual Exercise.

Which consists in a right use of the understanding.

The Understanding is to be kept from Ignorance & Curiosity, and ist from Ignorance.

of our Understanding and Will. First therefore we must clear the Understanding of two Things, Ignorance, and Curiosity: First from Ignorance, that it may have a clear Light to see what is necessary to overcome and mortifie our corrupt Passions and Affections. And this Light may be obtained two Ways, First and chiefly by earnest Prayer, imploring God's Holy Spirit that he would please to infuse this Light into our Soul. Secondly, by daily Practice of profoundly and diligently searching into the Circumstances of our Actions, and Affairs, considering things as they are in themselves, and not as they appear outwardly. Do but make tryal of this Exercise for a little time, and you will come easily to understand what things are really and truly good, and the Evil, Deceit and Vanity of others, which are not able to contribute that Satisfaction they promise at first sight and in Appearance, but rather rob us of the true Peace and Quiet of our Consciences. This

1. By Prayer.

2. By a diligent search into our own Actions.

This Point (which is to esteem all things according to their true and real Worth and Goodness) being well practised, will open your Eyes to see the meanness of all such Trifles, which those of the World most desire and delight in. It will shew us that earthly Honors and Pleasures are meer Vanity and Affliction of Spirit : That Injuries, Infamies, and Affronts patiently suffered, are the promoters of true and solid Happiness : That Afflictions are indeed Kindnesses, and that seeming Crosses are followed with certain Contentments: That to despise the World, is better than to be master of it ; and that to be willingly Obedient for the love of God to the meanest Creature is a more magnanimous Action, and the sign of a more generous Spirit, than to command the greatest Kings : That the humble acknowledgment of our own nothing, is more acceptable to the Divine Majesty, than to dive into the height and depth of all Sciences : That to conquer our own Appetites

Explanation.
This search into all things according to their true worth, will open our Eyes to see the meanness of all worldly Vanities.

tites and Imperfections, tho' they be never so small, is more commendable and glorious, than to take the strongest Towns, than to triumph over the greatest Armies, than to work the greatest Miracles, or even raise the Dead out of their Graves. All which things, and others of like nature are not discerned by us, because we do not enter into our selves to weigh them well as we ought, and as they really are in themselves; we permit our fancy to be prevented, prepossessed and surprized with some sensual Affection towards them, which so darkens and clouds our Understandings, that they are incapable of making a right Judgment of those Objects as they should, and they truly deserve.

Text.
A necessary
caution to
keep the Will
from fixing
its Love,

Wherefore be attentive to what I am about to tell you, it being of great Importance; the means to know the true Nature and different Properties of things that occur in your daily Transactions, is by taking a special care to bridle your

your Affections, and keep your Will free from fixing its Love upon any thing which is not immediately directed towards God himself, or to the means that may lead you to him; for to judge well of the Object that presents its self, your Understanding should first well consider it, before you let your Will make its choice or dislike of it; because when the Will hath once fastned its Affection upon the Object, the Understanding is very much hindered from coming to a true Knowledge thereof; by reason that the Consent of the Will intervening leaves it so involved and obscured, that it appears much better and fairer to the Understanding, than it is in its self: And hence it happens, that the Object being thus falsely represented to the Will, becomes too passionately beloved and embraced without due enquiry into its real Goodness; and the more vehement the Desire or Love of the Will is, so much the more grossly is the Understanding cloud-
C ed

Till the Understanding has first considered the Object.

ed in its Judgment ; and being so deceived, invites the Will to an increase of Affection towards it : So that these two chief Powers of Man's Soul, miserably deceived and misled, walk continually as in a Labyrinth from one Darkness into another, and fall from one Error into others much greater.

The same
caution is ne-
cessary also
in things that
are Good.

Take heed therefore of fastning your Affection upon any thing before it be well weighed and examined by the Understanding, and recommended to God in Prayer, that you may truly discern whether it be Good or Evil ; and I exhort you to do thus, not only in all indifferent things, but even in them also which are Good and Holy ; for tho' they are evidently Good in themselves, yet they may prove otherwise to you, by reason of some circumstance of Time, Place, Measure, &c. for which reason it often happens that many have endangered themselves in the most commendable Employments.

You

You must also in the second place warily refrain and disentangle your Understanding from Curiosity, least it draw and retain that in the Soul, which may retard you in your intended Victory; for a curious enquiry after earthly Things, which are neither Profitable, nor Useful, nor Pertinent to your Spiritual Purpose is generally the Poyson of the Spirit: Refrain therefore your Understanding as prudently as you can, and strive to wean it from all sorts of Curiosity, till by Degrees all the Novelty and Changes in the World may become very indifferent to you; so that whether they be great or small, if they do not concern you, you will not much mind them; and when you must needs hear or regard them, let your Will be always upon its Guard; nay it will be best even in the knowledge of heavenly Things to be Sober, and Humble, and Content your self with the knowledge of your crucified Saviour, and his blessed Life and Death,

The Understanding is also to be weaned from Curiosity.

And made simple and indifferent in worldly things.

preserving a moderate desire after all other things : For if you have sufficient knowledge to enflame your Hearts with the Love of God and hatred of your own Corruption, think you are wise enough, and as acceptable to God as those that know a great deal more. Besides in a curious search of all other Knowledge, there is too often much Self-love, and a certain pernicious Pride secretly lurking.

How highly
this conduces
to Perfection,

and how cunningly the
Devil plots
against it,

by suggesting
Pride to our
Understand-
ings.

If you thus wean your Understanding from these Curiosities, you will happily escape many dangerous Snares ; for as the Devil observes the Will and Resolution of those that apply themselves to a spiritual Life very strong and difficult to be overcome, he bends all his Endeavours against their Understanding, that so he may by little and little make himself Master of both the one and the other ; to this end he suggests curious and sublime Notions to those that are Quick, Ingenious, Witty, and of large Capacities, that being taken up with a false and imaginary

imaginary perswasion, that they are in the true enjoyment of God, they may forget the care they ought to have of purifying their Hearts, the resignation of their Wills, the mortification and knowledge of themselves: Thus they become ensnared with Pride, and set up a certain Idol of their own Wisdom; whence it follows, that if they do not take heed, they come by little and little to perswade themselves, that they have no need of the Counsel or Direction of others; which is an Evil very dangerous, and hard to be cured, since the Pride of the Understanding is far more pernicious than that of the Will; for he that is proud only in his Will, will submit sometimes to the Judgment of others. But as for him that is puffed up with the Pride of his Understanding, and assuredly believes his Opinion to be the best, What hope is there of his Cure? How shall he be brought to submit to anothers Judgment, since he thinks none so wise as himself?

Which is far more dangerous and difficult to be cured than that of the Will.

For when the Understanding (which is the Eye of the Soul, and should see and correct its secret Pride) is it self blind, and blown up with Presumption, when Light it self is become Darknes, and the very Rule crooked, you may easily conceive what the end of those things is like to be: Wherefore take care betimes to prevent this dangerous Pride, before it pierce you, as I may say, to the Marrow; moderate the vivacity of your own Spirit, and willingly submit to the Counsel and Judgment of others; become a Fool in your own Conceit for the Love of God, and by this means you will become truly Wife.

C H A P. V.

Of the Will, and the End to which we are to direct all our Actions.

A Will to do well is not sufficient.

IN order to become one Spirit with God, 'tis not enough to have good Designs, and a ready

dy Disposition to good Works; we must also do them from the motion of his Spirit, and with a desire of pleasing him only; in doing this we must expect to have violent Conflicts with our own corrupt Nature, which in all our Actions and Omissions seeks her own Convenience and Complacence: Nay, more in things Spiritual than any other; hence it is that when we propose to perform any thing as from Gods Will and Pleasure, we readily accept and consent to it, but oftentimes not as a thing pleasing to God, or commanded by him; but rather because we fix our Minds upon the Satisfaction and Content which is got by doing the Will of God.

But our Actions must be performed only to please God.

Which that you may attain to.

To avoid therefore this Snare which may hinder you from advancing in the way of Perfection, and by degrees to accustom your self to Will, and to do all things as excited by the Spirit of God, and with a pure intention to please him only, who should be the principle and end of all our Actions

Apply your
Understand-
ing to Gods
Will.

and Designs, it will be necessary for you to observe this Method. When a thing is presented unto you to be done which is agreeable to the Divine Will; First lift up your Understanding unto God, before you permit your Will to accept it, that you may clearly discern that it is the Divine Pleasure that you should perform it, and that it is for his Honour to please him; and then your Will being thus drawn and moved by the Divine Will, ought to endeavour to pursue it; for this end and intention, because God will have it so for his Honour and Glory.

And take
heed of being
deceived,

Likewise when you would omit, or refuse a thing contrary to, or not according to the Will of God, do not immediately set about, or reject it, till you have directed the Eye of your Understanding to the Divine Will, as you are afore instructed; and take care over your self lest you be deceived; because it may seem many times to you that you act, or omit this or that according to the Will and Pleasure of
of

of God, when indeed it is otherwise; for Nature doth so secretly seek her self in all our Actions, that those very things which we think please or displease us only for the Love of God, are most commonly desired or refused out of some Self-interest: Wherefore in the beginning of any Action, remove from your Mind as much as you can possibly all intentions which may have this mixture of Self-interest; nor do you adventure to act or omit any thing, till you feel and find your self inwardly moved to begin and go on with it, purely out of Obedience to the Will of God.

Because Nature is subject to seek her self.

The intention of doing all for God, is very good to be made in the entrance to any work.

But if you want time and leisure to make this actual Intention, and to consider the Causes, moving you to do, or omit any thing, take care to do it when occasion gives you leave, and then content your self with a virtual Intention to seek only God's Pleasure and Honour in every one of your Actions and Omissions. But in other Affairs, which admit of more deli-

And to be
often renew-
ed in the
progress of it.

beration, let this formal and express intention be made in the beginning of them, and in things of a long continuance, this intention is to be often renewed; least after a good beginning, some false or perverse intention insinuate it self into your mind; and thus you may shun the secret deceits of your own Nature, which is too prone to seek her self, as ordinarily to change thro' length of time our best Intentions, from their first proposed Objects.

Least self-ends creep in, and so change and corrupt the purity of our first intentions.

So that a Servant of God, who is not very watchful may often begin a good work, and intend to perform it according to the Divine Will, and yet afterwards without perceiving it, he may so please himself in what he has done, that he may wholly forget his first design of doing it only for the Honour of God; and thus by little and little he may become so abandoned to the Satisfaction, Pleasure, Profit, or Honour accreuing to himself from these Actions, that if he chance to be hindered from continuing

continuing them by means of Sicknes or other accidents, he presently becomes troubled, dejected, and disquieted, nor can he without great difficulty be brought to his first pure intention of doing or suffering what God would have him out of obedience to him.

Whence it manifestly appears that his intention was not pure, for whosoever follows Gods motion, and desires only to please him, does not fix his affection upon one thing more than another; but is ready to have this, do that, or leave the other thing, in such a manner, time, and circumstance as it pleaseth God; so that he remains in such an indifferency, that whether he hath it or not he is equally pleased and pacified, always quiet and content. Because, however it falls out, he hath what he desires, and enjoys the end he aimed at, which was no other than to be conformable to the will of God.

Explanation,
He that does all things purely to please God, remains in a perfect peace and indifferency.

And has always what he desires.

In all your Actions therefore
and

Text.
Therefore
this right in-
tention is of
great impor-
tance.

and Omissions carefully cherish this right intention; for it is not to be expressed what strength, efficacy and comfort it will afford you; insomuch as the very least and meanest thing thus performed (to please God) and for his Glory, is of more and higher value in his sight, than the most heroick actions which are done without it.

Explanation.
This purity
of Intention
may be kept
even in things
aiming at our
own good.

But if the hopes of Eternal happiness, or the fear of punishment (which more particularly respect your own Interest) put you upon doing any thing that is good, yet even in this also you may make God's holy will your end, since he desires our happiness, and that we should escape Eternal damnation; and thus you will keep alive in your heart this holy motive upon all occasions; of the importance whereof I need not enlarge this Discourse, it being most certain, that as the most holy and Heroick Action becomes not only defective and unvaluable, if it be not done for a good end, but even

And it puts
such a worth
upon our
actions.

That the best
without it, is
lost and may
be sinful, and
the smallest
with it, is
very accept-
able to God.

sinful

sinful if it be directed to an ill end; so on the contrary, the smallest and least action, hath an inestimable price and value when done with an intention simply for God and his good will and pleasure: insomuch that a single penny bestowed on the poor, is more acceptable to the Divine Majesty, when given purely to please him, than if the same person should give away his whole Estate for any other by or self ends whatsoever.

This Exercise of sacrificing our selves, and all our actions purely to please God, of sighing always after God, of seeking him in every thing we do or omit; and to aspire continually to God with lively affections, as to our most amiable and only good, (who so much deserves from all his rational Creatures, this Honour, Love and Service above all other things) may seem at first very difficult; but a little use will render it easie, and the frequent consideration of God's infinite worth, will so inflame the will in the production of the aforesaid

If this exercise seem hard at first yet use will render it easie.

And soon get
a habit in
our Souls.

said acts of fervour and affection, that we shall with much ease and speed get a habit of doing all things for his sake who only deserves it. To which also the following reflections upon our own obligations to do it will not a little conduce.

Especially if
we consider,
how our dear
Lord has
loved us.

Which ap-
pears in our
Redemption.

Preservation,

For who can choose but be persuaded to seek and will the pure honour of God, with an entire resignation to the orders of his Divine Providence in all things, if he often call to his remembrance how much he hath first honoured and loved him? In our Creation, he made us of nothing to be like himself, and all other Creatures to serve us: In our Redemption he sent no Angel, but his only Son to pay our Ransome; not by the Corruptible value of Gold and Silver, but by the infinite price of his most pretious Blood, and by his painful and ignominious death: In our preservation each day, hour and moment, fighting our battles for us against our Enemies, preventing and accompanying us with his Heavenly Grace, and leaving
with

with us his dear Son, always ready for our support and sustenance in the Holy Sacrament: These favours and many more are evident signs of the love and value which our great Creator has to us, his poor and wretched Creatures; and are in themselves such inestimable benefits, that none but his Divine understanding is capable to comprehend the least of them. And how much are we bound in exchange to do for so excellent a Majesty who has done such great things for us? For if Kings and Princes receiving Honour from private Persons, think themselves bound to return them reciprocal honour; what ought our vileness to endeavour towards the supream Monarch of the Universe, who has so highly exalted us?

And many other benefits

Which are so great that none but God can comprehend them.

CHAP.

C H A P. VI.

*Of two Wills that are in Man,
and the continual strife, and
Combat between them.*

Two Wills,
Rational and
Sensual.

YOU are to take notice that there are two Wills in Man: The one of Reason, which is therefore called Rational or Superiour, the other of Sense, and so is called Sensual or Inferiour, and sometimes goes under the name of Sensuality, Appetite, Concupiscence, the Flesh, Passion, and the like: And tho' each of these is in Man, yet because we are not properly to be said to be Men, more than we act as Rational Creatures, we cannot say that we truly will or choose any thing, if we will it only by the Will of Sense, or unless the Superiour, or Rational Will also gives its joint consent. In this diversity therefore consists principally all our Spiritual war, that our Superiour Will and Reason being as it were in

The Rational
is feated be-
tween God's
Grace and
our Sensu-
ality.

in the middle between God's Will which is above it, and our Sensuality which is inferiour to it, is perpetually assaulted and invited by one and the other, which endeavour each of them on his side to draw it, and make it subject and obedient to it self.

Now this Combat is not very difficult to them, who are either truly Vertuous, or wholly given up to their Vices; For the Vertuous come no sooner to the knowledge of God's holy Will, but they presently yield their consent, and bridle their Sensuality: On the contrary the Vicious act without scruple, according to their Appetite, checking the motions of the holy Spirit, which contradicts it: They therefore chiefly feel the greatest troubles and difficulties, who have been great Sinners, and have contracted ill habits; especially at first when they are resolved upon Amendment and a more perfect Course of Life, and to this end separate themselves from Worldly and Carnal delights, to be

And the truly
vertuous
yeild readily
to God's Will.

And the Vi-
tious to their
Sensuality.

But they who
of sinners are
become Con-
verts, have
the greatest
Conflict.

Who must
therefore re-
solve to bear
patiently the
loss of their
pleasures.

be the more at leisure to love and serve God for the future; because the inward drawing of God's Will, which their superiour Will receives from above; and the motions and contradictions of their Sensuality which it suffers from below, are so importunate and violent on each side, that the reason between them both is often brought into extream streights and perplexities. Wherefore, let none think to obtain this victory, who is not prepared and resolved to support patiently all such pains and crosses as he must feel, in leaving those Pleasures his Affections are and have been much fastned to; for this reason so very few attain to true perfection, because finding a great deal of trouble in the beginning of their Conversion, and in getting rid of their depraved affections and desires; they do not stand firm to their resolutions in these attacks, (which are inevitable, when we resist so many motions of our corrupt Wills and Sensuality;) but rather like cowardly

ardly Soldiers they quit the field,
and yeild up themselves with their
Arms to the Tyrannous insults of
their Enemies.

There are many who indeed
would not be guilty of Robbery,
nor unjust Gain; but yet have
their affections excessively fixt up-
on those things they have a just
title to: So likewise there are those
that would not purchase Honours
or Preferments unlawfully, but
they love and desire them passi-
onately: They will keep to their
appointed fast-days very punctu-
ally, but take no care to mortifie
their Passions; They will live
temperately and chastly, but are
loath to leave pleasing Company,
which hinders their Union with
God, and greatly retards them in
their tendancy to perfection: from
all which, and the like petty affecti-
ons, it follows that the good works
they do, are performed with a
certain irksomness of mind, and
are accompanied with divers self-
interests and secret Imperfections,
with great self-conceit, and
com-

Several sorts
of unmorti-
fied Persons.

Whole
affections are
accompanied
with many
imperfections.

And who
make no
proceeds in
spirituality.

But are full
of Ignorance
and Blindness.

A danger in
the choice of
Spiritual ex-
ercises dis-
covered.

One danger is
being mistaken
in their
choice of exercises.

complacence in their own actions, and with an earnest desire to be liked and approved by others: But all these not only make no Progress in the way of Spirituality, but rather go backwards, and are in Eminent danger of falling into their former vicious courses, because they have not yet a right Taste of true vertue; but behave themselves ungratefully to their merciful Creator, who hath freed them from the tyranny of the Devil; they are likewise under very great Ignorance and Darknes, neither understanding nor seeing their danger, but falsely and foolishly fancying themselves to be in a state of security.

This dangerous Deceit and pernicious Error very few take notice of; for which reason it is that many of those that apply themselves to a Spiritual Life, out of self-love, make choice of such exercises as are most pleasing to themselves, rather than those that are most profitable to their Souls; when indeed, they ought to begin with

with the knowledge of themselves, and of what may root out their Passions, irregular Inclinations, and sensual Apperites; against which they ought according to all the Laws of Reason to bend their Endeavours, and all the effort of their Combat, till they are entirely subdued as far as is possible in this Life.

C H A P. VII.

Of the manner of fighting against sensual Motions, and of the Acts that the Will must produce to acquire a habit of Vertue.

AS often as you feel your self assaulted by the Motions of Sensuality, turn your mind immediately to God, and if you would follow his will, who on his part calls you to oppose and resist your Sensual desires, you must practice these Exercises.

When your
Sensuality
rebels.

First,

Secure your
reason from
consenting,
by a vigorous
resistance.

If the motion
continues,
supprels it
more force-
ably again
and again, to
get a perfect
hatred of it.

And produce
Acts of those
Vertues
which are
conttary to
these Vices.

First, as soon as the Temptation is perceived, you must make a strong and generous resistance, lest your Superiour Will or Reason yeild any consent unto it. And if any remainder of such motions continue to disturb you, having gain'd a little ground, repel them again with more Force and Vigour. But if they still persist to arise and assault you, then that you may have occasion to get the more mastery over them, cast them from you with all the horror and disdain you can; and this way is to be used against all the temptations, and unruly affections of Sensuality: Except only the motions of the Flesh; whereof I shall speak more hereafter in its place: In short it must be your continual Exercise to produce frequent and fervent Acts of those Vertues which are contrary to the temptations of the Sensual appetite; for Example, suppose you are tempted to Impatience, if you diligently observe what passes in your interiour, you will there perceive

perceive that the temptations to impatience do continually torment and assault your superiour Will, to oblige it to yeild and condescend to what they desire. You must therefore redouble the fervour of your Will, to contradict and resist the least motions of the said temptations, and producing acts that are directly contrary to them, that your superiour Will may not consent to them; you must never give over fighting till you see your Enemy conquered and dying, and being unable to prevail against you, yeild you the Victory.

But further you are to know, that when the Devil perceives us so constantly and vigourously to oppose such Suggestions, Passions and Affections, he treacherously seems to withdraw himself for a time, and leaves stirring them up, least by the continual exercise of our reason against them we should get the habit of these Vertues, which are opposite to those Passions: You are therefore to be very
wary

But beware
of your Enemy, who
sometimes
suppresses
these motions

And not let
slip the least
occasion ex-
ercise.

and fighting
with your
Enemies

till you get a
perfect ha-
tred of them.

wary that you let not any occasion slip of acquiring these Vertues : At which times when you see your sensitive part the least moved, or stirred up, and evil thoughts ascending from it into your mind, be steadfast in opposing them in the beginning of the fight, with all the warmth and vigour you can, and repress these evil suggestions; boldly denying them any Entrance or Continuance, repeating this upon all such occasions so long, till you find that you are become master of your self.

Now as it happens very often, that not driving away our Enemies with hatred enough, but only perhaps because we know we do well in it, and that it pleases God, we run the risque of being overcome again by them some time or other. We must endeavour to pursue and drive them far from us, with Acts not only of Resistance, but also of Disdain and Abhorrence, till we at last come to have a true and perfect hatred of them.

Lastly

Lastly, That you may adorn your Soul with a habit of Vertue, 'tis not enough to oppose our unruly Passions, and evil Affections, by all those Exercises we have been speaking of, you must also frequently make Acts of all those Vertues which are contrary to them; as thus, if any one gives you an occasion of Impatience, think it not enough for you to conquer that Passion according to the Rules afore delivered, but force your self to receive Content in the Trouble that is past, in the resolution of suffering more or greater of the like nature, or any other; you should also constrain your self to converse Lovingly, speak Kindly, serve Heartily that very Person whose Behaviour has thus moved your Impatience.

And the way to plant Vertues, is to practise acts contrary to these Defects.

The reason why such contrary Acts are necessary to perfect our Vertue, is because the Root from which our Vices proceed can by no other means so fully be extirpated; therefore (to continue the same Example) altho' when we are

Explanation.
The reason why such contrary Acts are so necessary.

D slight-

Is, that whilst
the Root of
Vice remains
alive in us, it
will still bud
forth and
choke our
Vertues.

Therefore we
must make
many Acts
contrary to
the vicious
Habit.

slighted and despised, we do not yield to the motions of Impatience, but beat it down with the fore-mentioned Weapons; yet if we do not habituate our selves to make this Contempt easie to us, we shall never be wholly freed from the Vice of Impatience: Which (by reason of our natural proneness to seek the increase of our Reputation and Honor) is founded in the Abhorrence of all Contempt; and so long as this vicious Root remains alive, it will be still putting forth and make our Vertues Weak and Languishing, and sometimes choke them up; besides it puts us to perpetual danger of Relapses upon all occasions which are presented unto us, so that without the practice of such contrary Acts, we can never obtain the true Habits of Vertue. And you are further to be instructed, that these Acts must be so fervent, frequent, and numerous, that they may be capable to destroy the vicious Habit; which having got the Possession of our Hearts by many vicious

vious Acts must thence be forc'd out by many Acts of a contrary Nature, that the desired vertuous Habit may be let in, and implanted in its room : And there will be required more good Acts to obtain a Habit of Vertue, than vicious Acts for the Habit of Vice, because those are not assisted (as these are) by Nature corrupted with Sin ; I add to all this, that if the Vertue which you practice requires it, you are to make outward Acts, conformable to the inward : As in the aforesaid Case, you must use words of Love and Sweetness, and strive to find some occasion of serving him whom you take for your Opposite and Enemy.

That we may implant a Habit of Vertue.

And these Acts must be sometimes external as well as internal.

And altho' these practices be accompanied with so much coldness and deadness, that it seems as if you did them entirely against your Heart, yet by no means omit them ; for as Weak as they are they will support you in the Combat, and open your way to the Victory.

Text. Which is indeed full of trouble, but very profitable.

You are also to take care, not only to resist the great and effica-

You must be diligent also against the least evil Motions.

cious Motions of Vice and manifest Wickedness, but even the least and smallest Passions and disordered Motions: For these are but the forerunners of the greater, opening the Door for them to steal in upon us unawares, and so to precipitate us into all Vices: And it oftentimes falls out that those who slight these little Suggestions, and do not mind to dig them up by the Roots, when they afterwards least suspect it, have been surprized and overturned by their greatest Enemies more violently than at first.

Nay, even against lawful Affections when they are not necessary.

Lastly, You ought also to mortifie and deny your self, even in the desire of things Lawful, and permitted, when they are not necessary; for this will enable you without any trouble to deprive your self of things forbidden, and you will do that which is very acceptable to God.

For this is the way to become truly Spiritual.

And now if you will but try and put these Exercises in practice, I do not question, but by God's Grace assisting you, you will become

come very Spiritual in a little time :
But if you will needs take other
Methods , and follow other Ex-
ercises , tho' they should seem so
Excellent and Agreeable , as if
you had a familiar Acquaintance
with your crucified Saviour ; yet
take care of resting or pleasing
your self in such delicious Ways,
thinking they are the true way to
Perfection : For as a habit of Vice
proceeds from the frequent Acts of
our superiour Will, consenting to
the inferiour Appetite of Sensuali-
ty ; so on the contrary the habit
of Vertue is begotten in our Souls
by often submitting, and conform-
ing our Will to the Divine Will ;
and as our Will can never be tru-
ly Good and Vertuous, nor uni-
ted to God, tho' it receive from him
never so holy and heavenly Inspi-
rations, and be drawn by the im-
pulse of his Will to all its Actions
and Omissions, unless it consent to
the Divine Operations within it
self ; so neither can it be termed
vicious and separated from God,
tho' never so much tempted and

troubled by our Sensuality, if it does not obey and yield willingly and deliberately to it.

CHAP. VIII.

What we must do when our superior Will, or Reason seems to be overcome by our inferior Will or Sensuality.

As long as your Will does not consent to your Sensuality, fear not.

For Victory consists not in feeling no Motions, but in not yielding.

IF you sometimes fear that your rational or superiour Will can no longer resist, or hold out against those violent Inclinations, that assault it, because you cannot feel in your self such efficacious Desires to oppose them, be not troubled nor lose Courage, but stand as fast as you can, still fighting on with Constancy: For as long as your Reason keeps her self from consenting visibly to those Motions of Sensuality, so long you may esteem your self to have the better of the Field: For as it is not necessary that our superiour Will should concur with our superiour in our Actions, nor does our Victory consist

consist in feeling no perverse Passions in our Sensuality; our Reason may truly will and choose a Thing or Action, as often as it pleaseth, notwithstanding the Rebellion and Resistance of Nature, the Murmuring and Opposition of the World, and the Rage of the Devil.

If it sometimes happen that these Enemies should so suddainly and violently rush in upon you, and surprize your Reason as to give it no respite to produce such Acts of contrary Affections, whereby it might suppress their irregular Motions; in this Case make use of and defend your self with your Voice, saying, No, no, I will have nothing to do with you, I will never consent unto you; and thus a Man would behave himself who is assaulted and oppressed by his outward Enemies; for his Sword proving useles in his defence, he strives with all his might to disengage himself, and step backwards that he may get Ground and Time to put himself in a po-

But if your Enemies surprize your Reason,

Give back a
little to gain
Time and
Strength.

sture of Defence to resist and drive them away. Do you in like manner, O noble Souldier of Christ. First, give back a little in order to gain Time to think upon your Weakness and Nothingness, and then retaking Courage by your hope and confidence in God, considering you are nothing, can do nothing, and he can do all things, and at the same time make a generous and brave Assault upon your Enemies, saying, Lord help me, O God support me, Dear Jesus deliver me from this Danger.

And if you
have time
help your
self with Con-
sideration.

But if you have time given you to breath upon it, than you may strengthen and support your Will by a more deliberate use and application of your Understanding, fetching strength from the Consideration of those means which may be helpful against your Enemies: As for Example, If when you are under some trouble, Affliction or Persecution, Impatience is ready to overcome you, inso-much that your Will cannot, or at least will not bear its Assaults, or dissemble

dissemble it any longer, help your self presently with these following thoughts, or the like.

First, Consider whether or no you have any way deserved, or given just occasion for this Trouble or Persecution that has befallen you; if so, then you are by all means to rest contented, for it is very just and reasonable that you should patiently bear the Wounds you have given your self with your own Hands. But if it did not come by your own particular Fault, then remember and turn your Eyes upon your other Sins; for which your gracious God hath not punished you as you deserve, nor you grieved for them as you ought: And thence conclude since his Mercy has exchanged the Punishment they deserved which is Eternal, or at the least some long temporal Affliction, into this easie, short and fatherly Correction. What is more reasonable than that you should embrace it, not only with a willing Mind, but also with a thankful Heart?

1. Whether you have deserved this Affliction,

If so, rest contented,

If not, think of your former Sins.

D 5

Third-

Think also
t at Self-de-
nial and Suf-
fering is the
way to Hea-
ven.

Thirdly, But if you should think (which God forbid you should) that you have grieved sufficiently for your past Offences, and that you never committed any great ones; you are however to remember this, that none can enter into the Kingdom of God, but through the narrow Path of Self-denial, and of Patience in Tribulations: And 'twas this way that Jesus Christ himself, and all his Blessed Saints ascended into Glory.

and if there
were another
way, yet your
Duty to your
Saviour binds
you to choose
this,

Fourthly, But suppose that you might find out some other way to Heaven, yet all the Laws of Love and Gratitude oblige you not to desire it; since the Son of God himself chose the way of the Cross, by which he would enter into his Kingdom, and for your sake, that you should imitate him, hath left you such a perfect Example of Patience.

as being the
most grateful
and pleasing
to God.

Lastly, Amongst all the pious Motives and Meditations that you may use on these, or the like Occasions and Necessities, for the
sup

support and confirmation of your Will, this seems to be one of the most Efficacious, to think how amiable and acceptable you are to God, how he delights in you and loves you, when he beholds you for his sake so resolutely engaged in this Warfare; so wholly bent upon rooting up all your corrupt Passions and Inclinations, and studying to plant solid Vertues in their places; and all this because you believe it to be his holy Will and Pleasure.

C H A P. IX.

That we must not purposely avoid the occasions of Fighting.

ANd now besides all those advices I have hitherto given for the adorning your Souls with vertues. This you are to take as a short and certain Maxime, that you neither fear nor avoid the occasions of fighting that are offered you; for if you would have a habit of

The way to get true vertue is not to avoid the occasion of fighting.

but rather to
seek them
out.

of any vertue, as (for example of patience) your way is not to shut your Self up from Conuersing with others, or to shun those persons actions, or thoughts that are apt to move you to impatience; no, you ought rather to seek them out, desire and love such Company and Conuersation, as are the Causes of your unquietness and disturbance, and as often as you shall have occasion of Correspondance or Inter-course with them, prepare your self with a ready will to receive and endure patiently all crosses and troubles which they may any way bring upon you; and this will be the way to accustom your self to patience.

or an imploy-
ment that is
a little tedi-
ous to you.

In like manner if any business grows tedious and troublesome to you, either because the person that commands or puts you upon it, displeaseth you, or because it is of it self offensive, or that you are thereby hindred from some other Imployment that would please you better, yet leave it not upon any terms; but rather set sooner upon that

that than any other, tho' it be never so wearisome or ungrateful, nay altho the leaving it undone, seemes to settle and quiet your mind; for otherwise you will never be able to get any degree of perfect patience, this peace being not at all solid, and your heart not yet sincerely purifi'd from your disorderly passions.

And the same thing may be said concerning such thoughts as sometimes trouble and disquiet your mind, instead of rejecting them, you should kindly entertain them, and treat them as grateful guests; because the trouble they bring you will enure you to the patient suffering of things that are contrary to your humour; and whosoever teacheth you other maximes, teacheth you rather the manner of getting rid of the vexatious thoughts that torment you, than the means of attaining the vertue you desire to gain. Nevertheless it will be very convenient or fitting for an inexperienced Souldier in the Christian Conflict, warily and prudently

and the same rule may be applied to troublesome thoughts.

yet a young beginner must be wary in this war,

But never to
desert the
feild.

dently to Combat and defend himself in Encounters with wicked thoughts. And therefore I counsel him sometimes to oppose them, other times to draw back a little, according as he is more or less advanced, in the acquiring of vertues, but he is never so to turn his Back upon them as to seek to be quit of all the trouble, and irksomeness that may arise from them, for he that frees himself after this manner, as soon as he feels the next rising motions of Impatience, having no strength or ground of the contrary vertue, will be in great danger of laying down the arms that he had took up for his defence.

This advice has no regard to the vice of Impunity, of which, as I have said, we shall treat elsewhere in a particular manner.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Of the manner of resisting sudden motions of Passions.

IF you have not yet steadiness enough to bear and repulse the unexpected blows of an Injurious tongue, or any other Cross, without trouble and regret, you may thus enure your self to it. First by a prudent foresight of them, and many times wishing for them, before they come upon you and waiting for them, with a firm resolute and prepared mind.

The manner of foreseeing them is to consider your station, profession, and humour, as also the places and company You frequent or are likely to converse with; and thus you may easily foresee what may probably befall you, and how you must carry Your self, and fortifie your mind against any sudden surprisal of passion, and if some difficulties should hapen, you did not think of, then besides the former strength

First. you are to consider your station, &c. that you may foresee what is like to befall you.

strength you had prepared by your first Resolution to bear all Cross events with an Evenness of mind, you may also further help your self by this method.

But if some cross unforeseen happens fly to the thoughts of Gods love and Providence.

When you begin to perceive the first rising of impatience by being slighted, contemned, or any way injured, presently enforce your Mind towards God, and think of the unspeakable goodness and infinite love he has for you, which inclined him to send you this trouble and adversity, and that by bearing it patiently for his love, you may draw nearer, and be more perfectly united to him. And after you have thus concluded with your self that it is his Divine Will and Pleasure, you should suffer it patiently; then reflect your thoughts back again upon your self, and reproaching your Laziness, say in your heart, alas, why do I mean to strive thus to cast off this Cross, which no Enemy, but my heavenly Father hath laid upon me, as a pledge of his love; then turn to the Cross or Calamity which presseth

Who sends it or permits it.

eth you, salute it, Embrace it, and receive it with all possible joy and alacrity. And if the passion be so unruly and Violent that you cannot presently Elevate your mind to God, but are perhaps wounded and almost worsted by it, endeavour nevertheless to do it the best that you can, as if you were not.

and be constant though almost conquered.

But the most Sovereign and efficacious remedy against these sudden and unexpected motions is this; to take away in time the cause from whence they proceed, as if, when you are contradicted in any thing, the affection you have for it, makes you Commonly fall into a sudden alteration of mind, the way to be rid of the trouble is to cast off the affection. But if this trouble and vexation ariseth not from the thing, but from the person himself who displeases and moves you by every little action, by reason of the little solidness of your mind to bear it; then the best remedy is to do violence to your own Inclination, and

But the best remedy against sudden motions, is to cut off these causes.

and oblige your will to love and wish well to that person.

Explanation.

For besides that he is a Creature framed as you are, by the Almighty hand of God, and redeemed by the same precious Ransome of your dear Saviours Blood, he also presents you with a happy occasion, if you can love it, and lay hold of it, to imitate the Example of God himself, who is good and gracious to all.

CHAP. XI.

Of the manner of fighting or Subduing the Lusts of the flesh or Concupiscence.

In this war you must change your weapon.

THIS vice to be resisted after a particular manner very different from the rest; and therefore you are to take notice of these several times, that is, before the temptation, when you are tempted, and after it is over and left you.

and therefore before the Temptation you are

Before the temptations of this kind assault you, you must not think of the vice it self in order to fight

fight with it, but only the causes from whence it may proceed. First then, avoid as much as you can the conversation that may be never so little dangerous, and when you find your self engaged unawares, keep your self upon your Guard, and shew your self as little complaisant as possible. Because this enemy is not to be confronted but avoided by all possible means; and we are to fear the meeting with any person whatsoever whose presence may put us in the least danger; and we must have care of being presumptuous because we do not presently feel the sting of the temptation: for this treacherous vice makes it's approaches most commonly by stealth and wounds us the more Grievously the more it covers it self under fine flattering and specious pretences; whereby we neither distrust it's design nor stand so warily upon our guards to defend our selves. So that there is often times more cause of fear when our visits and familiarity are continued under the

not to think of the vice, but avoid all occasions of procuring it; which are
1. Conversation.

This Enemy assaults us by stealth.

pre-

and under
pretence of
lawfulness,
&c.

2. Sign of fa-
miliarity, &c.

3. Idleness.

pretence of lawfulness, of obligation, and of compliance, or even of vertue in the parry whose company we desire and love. For the poysonous pleasure of our Sensuality is too apt to intermix it self with this affection, and insensibly distilling into the heart, and penetrating by little and little into the very bottome of the soul, at last darkens and obscures the reason, till it begins to flight all dangers, and so by degrees fall either into open ruin, or at least into such troublesome temptations as are afterwards very hard to be conquered. Therefore if you find your self engaged unawares in such Company avoid all pleasant looks upon any such persons or things, all shew of familiarity, Courtship, or any signs or Expression of love or the like; but if you have some necessary business, with such a one dispatch it with all speed, behaving your self with all modesty and gravity. Thirdly, Take heed of idleness and watch very dilligently and constantly over your Actions and thoughts

thoughts, that you never act or think any thing unbeseeming your Christian state and profession.

Fourthly, Never judg rashly of your neighbour above all concerning this vice? and tho' his sin be manifest and cannot admit of an Excuse, you ought rather to compassionate his case, and not censure him with disdain, but from thence learn to be humble and abase your self, acknowledging that you are no better your self, than a little dust and ashes. And trembling with Awful fear, endeavour the more earnestly after a stricter Union with God in prayer, least you being tempted, should fall into the same fault; for if you are ready to judg and slight others, God will punish you to your cost, and permit you to fall into the same vice or a worse, that you may truly learn to know and humble your self for your pride and presumption, and being thus humbled may the more diligently strive to remedy either of those vices; and if you do not fall, know that the condition you are

4. Rash Judgment of those that fall into this vice.

inverted but
down to
-directed to
-directed to

are in, ought to make you fear the more.

5. Vain complacency.

Lastly beware of vain Complacency in your self upon feeling any sensible grace, or Spiritual Comfort, or inward delight in devotion; perswade not your self that you are the more Perfect for that, or that you will thenceforth have no enemies to fight withal and Conquer you; but be alwayes fearful and careful over your self.

In the time of Temptation mark the Cause of it, whether external, and fly from it.

2. In the time of temptations, consider whether they proceed from an External or internal cause. By external causes, I mean conversation, Entertainments or Discourses that have a tendency to this vice, against which the true remedy and best Security, is to fly from their infection as you have heard before: By the inward causes may be understood a vigorous health and disposition of body, or such filthy thoughts as come either from our former ill Customs, and neglecting to watch over our senses, or else from the Devils suggestion. As to the Body it must be kept under with fasting, watch.

Or inward.

And prevent or correct it by mortification.

watching, and the like mortifications and austerities according to the Rules of Discretion; and the Remedy for unclean Thoughts is and Prayer and Meditation. silent Prayer, and pious Meditations, diligent Labour, and continual Employment in Affairs agreeable to your Station.

But I would not advise you to choose such points of Meditation as some Books may prescribe for Remedy of these Temptations; such as to consider the Baseness of carnal Vices and their insatiableness, the great Shame and Danger which of necessity accompany them; and lastly, the ruin of Reputation and Estate, Discontents and temporal Inconveniencies, and such like: For though those are good Meditations, yet they are not proper Means to be used in conquering of those Temptations; the true and proper Remedy being to fly not only from the least thoughts of this Sin, but also from But not as some Books prescribe, all things that may cause them, which may give occasion to Impurity. tho' they seem never so contrary or opposite: For tho' such Meditations,

tations as these may be able to drive them away; yet at the same time it fastens such Fancies in the Memory; that there are just Grounds to fear falling into delight thereof.

But by Meditating on Christs Death and Passion,

Wherefore let the subject Matter of your Meditations, for this purpose, be rather the Mysteries of the Passion and Death of our Saviour Jesus Christ; and if Temptations of that nature do also in these pious Meditations intrude themselves (against your Will) and disquiet you more than ordinary (as I am assured they will, notwithstanding all your Care) yet be not out of Heart, nor leave off your well begun Meditations, nor think it worth while to resist or dispute with these flying Thoughts; but proceed constantly in what you are about, taking no more notice of these Fancies, than if you never had them in your Mind. And this is the best and most secure way to conquer unclean Thoughts, though never so importunate and troublesome, and

and never stay to examine them, to know whether you have given your consent to them or not; for this is a cunning Deceit of the Devil, who under the appearance of Good, lies waiting to ensnare and bring you into Inconveniences, which at another time, when you are at quiet, and free from these troublesome Temptations, will be easily perceived.

and do not stay to dispute with carnal Temptations.

As concerning Prayer, another remedy against this Vice, it is best made by often lifting up your Mind to God by fervent Aspirations and Ejaculations, with a ver-
tual Intention only to pray for Victory over these your Enemies, without any actual Reflection upon the Temptations of the Vice it self; beware therefore of being too busie in confessing or descending to particulars of this nature in your Prayers, to shew as it were their Baseness and your Misery, by reflecting upon special Circumstances; for this may endanger your falling into new Delight; and this will suffice for your Defence in time of Temptation.

And in Prayer make no actual and particular Reflections upon them.

E Lastly,

After the
Temptation
is past, stand
upon your
Guard.

Lastly, After the Temptation is past, think not that you are presently safe and secure from the same Assaults; but stand upon your Guard, and endeavour as much as you can, to forget those Objects which occasioned the Temptations, tho' you find your self never so much inclined to it upon the pretence of Vertue or Piety to do the contrary; for all this is but the secret Perswasion of our corrupted Nature, and a strong delusion of the Devil.

C H A P. XII.

*How to fight against Negligence
and Idleness.*

Be readily o-
bedient to
good Inspira-
tions.

TO secure your self from falling into this pernicious Vice employ all your Endeavours, to correspond readily with all sorts of good and holy Inspirations, and to decline all earthly Satisfaction, and Curiosities, and superfluous Affairs not belonging to your State and Calling.

Concern-

Concerning which ready Correspondency with God's holy Inspirations, take this Rule; Be sure not to defer the undertaking and beginning of that thing, which you are certainly satisfied you ought to do in its proper Place and Time; for I assure you this delay in beginning any Business will prove an unrecoverable Loss in the progress thereof; because one short Lingring calls on a second, which invites a third, and that attended by another, and so you will pass on to admit of more; to which your Nature will consent more easily than to the first, as having tasted the Bait, and swallowed down the seeming Pleasures of this Loytering. Whence it follows, that you either go about your Exercise when it is too late, or wholly lay it aside, because you find your self so much disgusted with it; thus by little and little, and almost insensibly, creeps in this ill Habit of Negligence, and we content our selves with this Conceit, that we will

To begin a good Work speedily in its due time,

is of great consequence to overcome Idleness.

do it more Carefully and Diligently another time. Take heed therefore of this subtil Enemy, which not only infects the Will, by making it loath the Action, but also blinds the Understanding that we do not apprehend the Vanity of these ill grounded Maxims; to fancy the doing of our Duty another time more devoutly and diligently, will be well enough; when we have time now to perform it; and so we voluntarily leave it, or negligently delay it.

And having
courageously
set upon it,
prosecute it
carefully.

Wherefore having courageously begun any good Work, continue it carefully, till you have made an end of it, but not too hastily; so as to hurry your Mind, or prejudice the Action, or to imitate the Fault and Idleness of those, who out of Slothfulness think upon nothing but quickly to make an end of what they are about, taking no care whether it will be well done, but only striving to dispatch it in all haste, that they may the sooner enjoy their Quiet and Repose, which

which is so agreeable to their Temper.

And because there is no better Remedy to recover one that is subject to this sluggish Vice, than to settle him to work; (and he that is slothful hates all sorts of Employments let them be never so good, having his thought more upon the Labour he must undergo, than the benefit that attends it;) therefore this Good must be discovered and made apparent to him, by shewing him the necessity of it, and the infinite Good there is even in one hearty Elevation of the Mind to God, or one little Action done for his Honour; it being of more worth than all the Wealth and Treasures of the World.

The Fruit of good Works must be discovered.

And as often as we use a certain Force and Violence with our selves, in a diligent Care about our Business and Duty, so often we shall find an unspeakable Good by getting a glorious Victory over our selves, and enriching our Souls with Vertue. But as for those who will still continue tepid and negligent,

Explanation.

ligent, God by little and little withdraws those Graces which he had formerly given them, and bestows them upon those who better deserve them.

And the trouble disguised;

And as for the trouble that attends the Prosecution of vicious Practices, it must be dexterously covered and disguised, that it may seem much less than it is: As for Example, Suppose you would employ your self an Hour in Prayer, and that seems too long to your lazy Disposition, use this pious Discretion, and perswade your self, that if you should spend half a quarter of an Hours time well in Prayer, you will after that leave off. And when this is past, get your Body to have Patience a little longer before you make an end; and so continuing from one quarter to another, the whole Hour will soon pass away, and your sloth insensibly baffled. But if nevertheless you find too much difficulty in this Exercise, or a real disability of Body to go thro with it; set your self a less task for fear of wholly disgusting

unless there be a real disability.

disgusting your self, and bring your self to it by degrees, till at last you will be accustomed to perform them with much ease and alacrity.

This, I say, in condescension to your Weakness: But if you would habituate your self to make all Labour light, and all Pains pleasant, the best, tho' a very difficult way, is to get before it, expect it and cheerfully embrace it at the first encounter; by which means you will find the tediousness in the doing it, will be turned into quiet and content; since what you are doing you do willingly, whereas on the contrary if you avoid Trouble and Labour, it will not only be irksome when it comes to you; but the very apprehension of it will be apt to disturb your quiet, and the fear of it will so continually oppress your Mind, that you will even abhor all taking of pains, as a thing that is burthensome to you, and still dread the occurrence of such Occasions, Persons,

But the best way to get a custom of enduring Hardships, is to expect Crosses continually,

and not avoid them.]

or Objects as are like to put it upon you.

Negligence
is highly pre-
judicial to
Perfection.

The reason I so much press this Point, and inveigh against this common Vice of Negligence, is because it is seldom perceived, and yet mighty prejudicial to most Persons; for it pursues us so secretly and subtilly, and gains ground upon us so treacherously, that by degrees it gnaws out the very Root of all our Spirituality, and insensibly infects the best of our Piety and Devotion. And our Enemy hath no better, or more alluring Bait to entice any one into his treacherous Snares, and especially those that aim at a spiritual Life; be therefore very vigilant, pray often, and heartily; be diligent in good Works, and make the best use you can of the time that is before you; prepare against the Marriage day, that you may be ready to go forth to meet the Bridegroom: Consider that God, who has given you this Day, has not promised you another; therefore improve each moment

And the most
alluring Bait
of our Enemy.

Therefore
take timely
care to pre-
vent it.

moment to advantage, and remember the strict account which will then be required of you. To conclude, you are to give that day for lost, tho' you have dispatched never so many Affairs, wherein you have not made some Progress, and gotten some Victory over your Enemies.

And account that day lost in which you have not done a good action.

C H A P. XIII.

How to govern our Sensuality.

YOU must keep a very strict Guard over your Senses, that whereas they are ordinarily the Door whereby the Devil enters into your Heart, they may rather serve as an entrance for God and holy Thoughts: Therefore in all your necessary Engagements among earthly Creatures, be sure to have your Heart free and disengaged from them, and your Affections often elevated to God, look upon him hidden in the Creature, as in his own Work: Then re-

Keep your Heart disengaged from earthly Creatures.

returning into your self, and considering that the same Lord is within you also, you may say to him, O Merciful and Eternal Lord God, thou art ever present with me, thou art more within me, than I am in my self, and yet ungrateful and forgetful Wretch that I am, I neither think upon thee, nor love thee, nor honour thee, as I ought.

and Contem-
plate your
Creatours
greatness,

2. Sometimes you may elevate your Thoughts to the Contemplation of God's Incomprehensible perfections, and endeavour to rejoyce in his Greatness and Glories, more than in any thing you have of your own: and be more pleased, that he is Incomprehensible in his Majesty, than if he were within the reach of your Understanding and Capacity.

And reduce
all Created
perfection, to
him the
Fountain.

3. And when you remark, or observe in the Rational Creatures, any Power, Wisdom, Goodness, Righteousness, or any other Perfections; lift up your Mind to God, as the Author of them, and say within your self; Behold these,

O

O my God are the little Rivulets,
flowing out of thee, the true Living
and Eternal Fountain, and im-
mense Ocean of all Good.

4. But when you find your self drawn and delighted by the beauty of any Creature, pass presently to the consideration of the supreme Beauty, and dwelling only upon the pleasure to be found therein; say, O my God, when will the happy day come, that my whole delight shall be fixed on thee alone; you may avoid also such surprizes of Pleasure after another manner; as when you perceive any agreeable object allures you to take pleasure in it, regard at the same time with the Eyes of your Soul, how cunningly the Devil lyes lurking under this Bait; who seeks by it to wound or destroy your Soul, and with Indignation tell him boldly; Ah thou cursed Serpent, how craftily dost thou lye in wait to infect me with thy Poison; and afterwards lifting your mind to God: say, O the goodness of my God, be thou Eternally blest and praised,

And all
earthly beau-
ty to that
which is
Heavenly.

Observe the
craft of the
Devil.

praised, that hast discovered this Enemy, that lay in wait to destroy my Soul.

But when things unpleasant befall you, think upon Gods Eternal Decree.

But in other Accidents, which are Irksome and ungrateful to us, and of hard digestion to our Nature; as cold or heat, hunger, pains, sickness, injurious usage, or the like; Elevate your Mind to his Eternal Will, who would have it so, and has decreed that you should suffer such an Affliction at this time, and with such Circumstances as attend it; upon this (full of hearty joy) say within your self. Now is this thy Divine Will, O my Eternal Lord and Love accomplished in me; whereby thou hast ordered it from all Eternity, that in this manner, and at this time, I should preceive and bear the Cross, and I believe verily all this to be for thine Honour and Glory, and the benefit and Salvation of my Soul.

So likewise in any sudden or dismal accident.

7. And you may make use of such thoughts as these upon all occasions of wind, weather, and the like, which are out of Man's power.

power and foresight to hinder or prevent; so when you read any thing that pleases you, raise your thoughts to God, whom you may imagine under the words you read, and receive them as coming from his own Mouth. And in like manner when good thoughts return to your Mind, with complacency and delight, by the reflection you make upon some good and vertuous Action you have done: turn your Mind immediately to God, and adoring him with profound humility and reverence; acknowledge all that good you have done, proceeded merely from his Grace, and therefore take heed you do not rob him of his Glory, by attributing any thing to your self.

And in all self
Complacency.

EX.

EXPLICATION.

A larger Declaration of the foregoing Chapter, concerning the Government of our outward Senses.

The Appetite
is violently
bent to seek
its Pleasure,

and makes
the Senses to
obtain it.

THat you may have a right apprehension of this useful Science, and learn how to govern and regulate your outward Senses; it concerns you very much to use all your utmost Care and Diligence, and a continual Exercise; because the Appetite which chiefly commands our corrupt Nature, is violently and inconsiderately bent to search after Worldly Comforts, Pleasures, and Satisfaction: and being of it self unable to acquire them, makes use of the Senses, as its proper Instruments to lay hold of their Objects; from whence drawing their Images, and Imprinting them in the Soul, it enjoys its desired Pleasure, which (by reason of its sympathy with
the

the Flesh) dilates its self through all those Senses which are capable of such Pleasures ; and from hence is derived the common Contagion, which infects and corrupts both Body and Soul. Secondly, being thus truly sensible of the danger of this Poison, apply an Antidote speedily, which may be this ; Beware of giving up the Reins to your Senses, and letting them run at random after the unruly fancy of their leading Appetite ; make use of them only in things that are good, profitable, or necessary, and if unawares they have gotten too much liberty, and are roam'd abroad beyond their bounds ; either recall them back, or else so regulate them, that whereas at first they had yeilded themselves Prisoners to vain and empty pleasures, they may now bring home some useful and noble spoil, and from every Object the Soul may take occasion of raising her Affections towards Heaven, to the Contemplation of her Creator, wherein this method may be taken as soon

The Antidote
against this
Poison,

and how to
curb the
Senses roam-
ing abroad,

by separating
the Spirit of
each Object
from the
thing it self
material.

Whether it
be a Crea-
ture which
has only a
Being ;

or hath Ve-
getation and
increase.

as any object is presented to the outward Senses ; separate the Spirit in the Creature, from the Creature it self, and consider it as having nothing in its own nature worthy to take up your thoughts ; only as it is the work of God, who has bestowed its being upon it, gives it the goodness, and indues it with the beauty and all the prerogatives and perfections it has ; and take occasion from thence to rejoyce and praise God, as the Cause and Fountain of all visible and imaginable excellencies, all Creatures being but small resemblances of what he eminently contains in his Divine Essence ; and taking pleasure in him alone, say, O Divine, and Aimable Essence ; How doth my Heart leap with Joy to think of thee, the Eternal Author of all created Beings !

In like manner, when you take notice of Trees, Plants, Herbs, Flowers, and such like ; think how they have no life of themselves, but from the Invisible Spirit, that quickens them : To whom you may thus

thus breath out your Soul; O the true Life, from which, in which, and by which all Creatures live and encrease! when shall I love him? when shall my whole delight be in him?

Upon the sight of any Beast, Animal, or Insect, let your mind soar up to God, the sole Author of all their Sense and Motion; saying, O thou Supreme Mover of all things, yet in thy self immovable, how great is my Joy in thy firm stability!

or hath Sense
and Motion;

So when your Senses are touch'd or pleased with the extraordinary beauty of any thing; separate with all speed that which appears to the Eye from the inward Spirit within the Center of it; and considering that all the fair outside proceeds only from the invisible Fountain, say with a chearful Heart, O the Joy of my Soul, when it thinks on the Eternal and Immense beauty, that is the Original Source, and Essential Cause of all created Beauty!

or is indued
with some
rare Beauty

And upon the consideration of
some

or Excellent
Perfection.

Some perfection of any Creature, first making the afore said distinction, break forth into such like Expressions: O rich Treasury of all Vertues, what satisfactions do I feel, that all good is derived from thee alone, and that all goodness compared to thy Divine Perfection is a mere nothing.

Also when
you under-
take any
Action;

When you are putting your hand to any Action, think upon God as the first cause thereof, and your self only as the instrument; saying, O Sovereign Lord of the Universe, how do I rejoyce, that I can do nothing without thee, and that thou art the Prime, and Principal Agent in all good Actions.

or refresh
your Body
with Meat
and Drink.

Taking any refreshment of Meat or Drink; reflect, who it is that gives the relish and savour to the Creature, and desiring to take no content but in him only; say, Rejoyce, O my Soul, that there is no true Satisfaction, but in God, and that in him only thou hast a full Abundance of all Pleasure.

If some sweet or fragrant smell affect

affect your Sense, stay not there ;
but ascend to him who is the source
of all sweetness: And say, alas!
O my Lord, as I am truly glad that
all sweetness proceeds from thee,
so grant, I beseech thee, that my
Soul being truly dispoiled of all
earthly Pleasures, may soar up
continually to thy delicious abode,
and be a sweet smelling Sacrifice
in thy divine Nostrils.

When you are taken with the
harmony of some Excellent Mu-
sick, let it put you in mind of that
which is heavenly, and say, O
my Lord, and my God, what an
unspeakable Harmony is there in
thy Infinite perfections. O what
admirable musick is there among
the Chorus of Angels and heavenly
Citizens. Thus may you learn

Or are de-
lighted with
musical Har-
mony.

to raise up your spirit by the means
of all sensible Objects to the con-
templation of the Divinity. You
may in like manner be instructed
how to pass from the same sensible
Objects to meditation of our Savi-
ours life and passion by considering
in them as before, that supream

Or any other
sensible ob-
ject.

How to rouse
your Soul by
the same
Objects to
contemplate
our Saviours
life and Pas-
sion.

good

Good, which is the efficient cause of their being, and all the beauty they have, admiring his infinite goodness and greatness, who being the absolute Lord of all things, would vouchsafe to descend so low as to become man, and dye for his sake, suffering his owne Creatures to arm themselves against him their Creator; many things will also particularly represent to you these sacred mysteries, and put you in mind of several instruments and circumstances of his cruel sufferings.

As, by the
sight of poor
cottages.

1. Poor Cottages will bring to your remembrance the Stable and Manger your Saviour was born in.

Of rain.

2. When it raineth you will reflect upon that divine moisture distilling from his Body in his bloody agony.

Of stones.

3. When you see any Ruin's or Heaps of Stones, they will put you in mind of the Rock that rent asunder at his death.

Of the earth.

4. The Earth will seem to tell you how it then trembled.

Of the Sun.

5. And in a dark and gloomy day you may think how the light

of

of the Sun was then obscured.

6. If you look pon the water, you will easily fall into the contemplation of that which issued out of his side, and so of all other objects. Of the water &c.

7. As when you are drinking Wine, think then of the Gall and Vinegar that he tasted. In tasting wine.

8. When you smell any thing sweet, think of the rotten and stinking Carcasses upon mount *Calvary*, where our Saviour suffered. In sweet smells.

9. Putting on your Cloaths, reflect how Christ, the Eternal Word, put on our Humanity to make you partaker of the Divine Nature. In cloathing your self.

10. Uncloathing your self, how naked he was nailed to the Cross; hearing a tumultuous noise of people, remember those abominable out-cries, away with him, away with him, Crucifie him. In uncloathing your self, In hearing noises.

11. When the Clock strikes, think how your Saviours heart panted in the Garden, at the apprehension of his approaching Passion, or seem to hear, and count the cruel strokes of the scourges or blows of the hammer, that fastned the nails thro'

In times of
sadness.

thro' his Sacred Body to the Cross.

12. If you are oppressed with sadness and sorrow, either by reason of sickness or sufferings, or out of Compassion to others; conceive, alas, how little is all this, compared to the Incomprehensible Grief, Distress, and Anguish, which pierced the Body and Soul of your dear Saviour.

Other ways
to meditate
upon sensible
Objects.

13. Having thus shewed you how to Elevate your Understanding, by means of all sensible things, to the Divinity, and to the Mysteries of the word Incarnate; I will also add other means and methods of meditation, drawn from outward Objects, that as the Gusts of Souls are various; so each one may find something proper for his relish; and this variety may not only be useful to Beginners, and those of a mean Capacity; but even to more elevated Souls, and those that are well advanced in the way of the Spirit, who being not always equally disposed to sublime Contemplations, may find something here to serve them in their lower

lower stations, or in the time of darkness and desertions.

14. When, therefore Objects very pleasing to the Eye, delicious to the Sense, and desirable to Flesh and Blood, shall be represented to you; consider how mean these things are in themselves, let the World commend and esteem them ever so much; how the best of them is no better than Dirt, and Dung, in respect of that glorious happiness, to which you are designed, and which you are pursuing and aspiring after.

By considering how mean the best of them are in themselves.

15. When your Eyes are dazzled with the brightness of the Sunshine, know for certain that your Soul is more Glorious and Beautiful than the Sun, if you are in a state of Grace, otherwise that it is more dark and obscure than Hell itself.

As the Sun's brightness.

16. When you look up and admire the beauty of the Firmament, Elevate your Soul to those higher Mansions of the Blessed Spirits, and there fix and feast your thoughts, in the prospect of that Happiness

The Firmament.

The Birds
Melody.

Happiness that is prepared for you.

17. When you hear the warbling Notes of Birds, or any other Musical harmony. Let your Spirit soar up, and dwell upon those Divine Allelujahs they are singing in Heaven; and beg of your dear Lord, that you may at last become worthy to join in Praises with those Celestial Choristers.

Walking a-
broad.

18. When you are walking along the way, think how every one of your paces is a step towards Death.

Observing the
flight of Birds

19. When you see the Birds, how swiftly they fly through the Air, and how the Waters are hastning into the Ocean; think how your Life slips away, and your Soul with greater speed running on to Eternity.

In windy and
stormy weather.

20. Let Storms and Tempests, Thunder and Lightning, put you in remembrance of the fearful day of Judgment; and beg Mercy and Grace of your Saviour; that you may now make such good use of the time he lends you, that you may be prepared to appear before his dreadful Majesty.

When

When Grief or Melancholy oppresseth your Mind, or any Inconvenience troubles you, raise up and resign your self entirely to the eternal Will of God, who is pleased this Affliction should befall you for your Good and his Glory, and be glad of this occasion to serve him according to his own Will and Pleasure.

In time of Grief and Trouble.

Let the Churches you frequent put you in Mind, that your Soul is God's Temple, and should be therefore kept Pure and Holy, fit for such a noble Guest.

Or when you are in the Church.

Finally, Let every Creature, all Objects and Accidents be so Spiritualized and Refined from their earthly Dross, that they may serve as true Instruments to the Perfection of your Soul, and become powerful helps to your Union with God, which is the only end you aim at.

Finally make all Objects and Accidents Instruments of your Perfection.

F

How

How to govern the Tongue.

And because the Tongue hath a near affinity with our Senses (for we willingly discourse of those things we take delight in.) I will here take occasion briefly to shew you how you are to regulate and govern this unruly Member.

Much talk
proceeds
from Pre-
sumption.

Much talking proceeds ordinarily from a certain Presumption which perswades us, that we are very knowing in the things we talk of, and so pleasing our selves with our own Conceptions, we endeavour to imprint them in the Minds of others, with superfluous and frequent Repetitions of the same Subject, to appear thereby more Masters of Reason than others; and as if we had Authority to teach others, or they stood in need of our Instructions. It is not easie to expresse in few Words the Evil that is the Consequence of this Vice, it being the encourager of Idleness and Detraction, the instrument

strument of Falshood, leaves the Mind light, and blasts and ruins the Spirit of Devotion.

Wherefore I advise you, in the first place, not to enlarge your self in long Discourses : If they are unwillingly heard, it is against the Laws of Civility ; if they are willing to hear them, you'l be too apt to exceed the bounds of Modesty.

Therefore avoid long Discourses.

Avoid also all pathetical and passionate Expressions, and an high tone of your Voice; for both these are generally odious to the Hearers, and commonly Arguments of Vanity and Presumption.

And passionate Expressions.

Speak not of your self, of your own Affairs, Parentage, or Kindred, unless upon necessity ; and then with all possible shortness, simplicity, and sincerity, and modesty ; and if another seem forward in such Speeches of himself, let his Indiscretion teach you, but do not imitate him, tho' his words seem'd to tend to Humiliation and Accusation of himself.

And all talking of your own Affairs.

And of your
Neighbours.

Let not your Neighbour nor his Concerns be the subject of your Discourse, unless it be in order to relieve him, vindicate him, or speak well of him, or some other charitable Account.

But speak
willingly of
God.

Shew a willingness to talk much of God, and particularly of his Love and Goodness, yet always with profound Reverence for fear of Indiscretion; and therefore be more satisfied to hear others Discourse, than to talk your self; and let what good is said, be received and treasured in your Heart.

And consider
before, and
when you
speak,

As for all other Discourses, let the sound only touch your Ears, but keep your Mind fix'd upon God, and if you must needs be attentive to them, because your Answer is expected, let your Thoughts be still Heaven-wards, and think well before you speak, and then you may easily resolve what will be proper to say, and whether it be not best to be silent.

The praise
and profit of
Silence.

Lastly, You will find by experience, that silence is of excellent use

use in your Spiritual Combat, giving you Strength to resist, Constancy to support, and Confidence to overcome : It is a sure Friend to him that distrusts himself, and puts his trust in God, it preserves us in a fit temper for Devotion, and comforts us in the exercises of our Duty ; and indeed, if we do but consider the Mischiefs that follow after much talking, it will be sufficient to make us in love with Silence ; to which that you may Habituate your self, make frequent use of Solitude and Retirement from unnecessary Company and light Conversation ; by which means instead of Men, you shall have Angels, and God himself for your Companions. In short, if you reflect upon the Conflict you have undertaken, and how much you have to do, you will find little leisure to spend in idle Discourses.

CHAP. XIV.

Of the Order to be observed in fighting against our Enemies.

Observe
those that
are your
greatest En-
emies.

THE Method or Order you may observe in resisting your Passions, is, First to enter into your Heart, and seriously and diligently to examine which has the greatest Power over you, what other Thoughts and Affections it is accompanied with.

And single out
the most dan-
gerous to
fight with.

Secondly, When you have found your Enemy, turn your Weapons against that which actually assaults you, and oppresses you the most, and is in danger to ruin you.

But when
they dont ap-
pear seek
them out.

Thirdly, And especially in time of peace with your Passions, when no Enemy seems to appear in the Field, do you begin with them and make your most vigorous Onset upon those which are most prejudicial to your Soul, and most displeasing in the sight of God.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

What course is to be taken when we are Conquered and Wounded by our Enemies.

IF you are fallen into some Fault When you are fallen, rise with all speed,
either through Frailty and Weakness, or sometime deliberately, and with the consent of your Will, get up again with all speed; and first in a deep acknowledgment of your own Baseness, and a hearty Hatred of your self, humble your self before God; then recollecting your Spirits, confess your Ingratitude to him, and say, O Lord, behold my Guilt and Misery, I have done this Action like my self, and what can be expected from me but Baseness and Sinfulness, I am sorry for it, O my God, with all my Heart, and I confess I should have done a great deal worse, and fall into much greater Sins, if thy merciful Hand did not

and confess your Fault.

continually uphold and raise me again; for which I render thee my most humble Thanks, and now, O Lord, deal not with me according to my Sins and Offences, but do thou like thy self, according to the Riches of thy Mercies in Jesus Christ, and let me no longer live out of thy Favour, nor ever offend thee any more.

Be not over
solicitous, or
fearful.

Having thus sincerely poured forth your Heart in the presence of God, do not distract your Mind with Reasoning and Thinking whether he hath forgiven you the Sin, or no; for such a Curiosity favours much of Pride, and is but disquiet and loss of time to no purpose, and a certain Snare of Satan. Therefore after you have humbled your Soul as before, cast your self wholly upon the Mercy of God, reassume your accustomed Exercises, and take Courage again, as tho' you had not fallen; and if you should chance to fall oftentimes in a Day thro' frailty or surprise, and receive many grievous Foils

Foils from your Enemies, yet never despair nor grow faint-hearted or timorous, but still get up again, and humble your self, and stand the stronger upon your Guard for the future, with as firm confidence in the goodness of God after the second, third, and last of your falls, as you did at the first.

The Devil has so much Envy to see how acceptable to God, and beneficial to the Soul this Exercise is, that he lays all his Stratagems to make us fearful and negligent, and to keep us from practising it ; use violence therefore to your self in this Case, and the more difficulty you find in it, so much the more redouble your Diligence in doing it, and never think it too tedious to renew it several times in a Day, as often as ever you fall : And if after such frequent relapses you feel an extraordinary trouble, confusion and diffidence in your self, yet still endeavour by all means to recover the inward peace and repose of your Soul, and then re

But be diligent, and use violence with your self.

Recovering the quiet of your Soul, and reconciliation with God.

F 5 concile

concile your self to God by Humiliation, as aforesaid; for quietness of Mind remaining after the Sin committed, is not any sign of your Sorrow for having offended God, but rather of fear from some private inconvenience you think you have thereby incurred.

The way to get this quietness is for the present to forget your Fault.

Now the way to recover the quiet of your Mind, may be this. Having truly turned your Soul to God, and humbly begged Pardon for your Offence, think no more of it; but endeavour for a time to forget it, and fix your Thoughts then more upon the infinite Love of God, and how earnestly he desires to unite himself to you, and make you partaker of his eternal Happiness: And when by this, or the like Considerations you have settled your Mind, and quieted your Heart, turn your Thoughts again to consider your fall, and do as you are directed in the beginning of this Chapter.

CHAP. XVI

*That we should always endeavour
to keep our Minds in a quiet
Frame.*

Explication.

AS when we have lost the quiet of our Heart, we are to use all possible endeavours to recover it, as aforesaid; so you are to know that no accident whatsoever can with any just Reason deprive us of the same; for 'tis very true, that we must be angry with our selves for our Sins, yet our Grief must be governed with Discretion, and accompanied with Tranquility; and our Sorrow must produce Acts and Resolutions of amendment of our Lives, not of Disquiet and Anxiety in our selves. As for other troublesome and unpleasant Accidents, as the Sickness, Death and Afflictions of
our.

No outward accident can justly deprive us of our peace.

For tho we
must needs
abhor things
contrary to
our Nature,
yet we may
love them as
coming from
Gods permis-
sion.

our dear Friends, or publick Calamities, as the Plague, War, Famine, Fire, and other Evils falling upon our selves or others, though as they are things contrary to our Nature, they must needs lie heavy upon us sometimes; yet we may by the Power of God's Grace, not only be resigned to them, but look upon them with Satisfaction, as the just Punishments of the Wicked, or exercises of Vertue to the Good; for which Ends our wise and merciful God permits them to befall us.

And so conform
our
selves to his
holy Will.

Thus conforming our selves to God's holy Will, we may quietly and peaceably pass through the midst of all the bitterness and contrarieties of this Life. And take this for a certain Truth, that all disquietness of Mind is displeasing to God, as being never without some Imperfection, and commonly proceeding from some Pride and Self-love.

Text.
You are to
appoint a
Sentinel.

To defend your Heart on all
sides against unquietness and trou-
ble

ble, you must appoint over your self a faithful Sentinel, which as soon as it discovers any thing tending to disturb or disquiet you, may presently give the signal that you may have time to take your Arms in Hand for your defence.

And if it happens (as too oft it doth) that thro' some sudden Assault you find your self strangely perplexed, presently setting all other things aside, pacifie your interior, and endeavour to regain a quiet and joyful Heart ; for without this be done, you will not be enabled to prosecute your other Affairs without exposing your self to great danger from the Enemy, who will from thence take occasion to attempt you more violently ; for he fears this sacred quiet and peace of the Soul (as the Tabernacle wherein God resides to manifest his Wonders) and therefore often pretending Friendship, he endeavours to surprise us by suggestions that have some appearance of Good, the design whereof

If you are surprised with perplexity, return with all diligence to quiet your Heart.

is

is in effect to bereave us of our Peace and Tranquility.

And therefore admit no new Affections.

Before offering them to God,

and praying him to mortify your Will and Desire.

As soon therefore as you have any notice of some new Desire or Affection, that demands admittance into your Heart, let it not presently enter in; but endeavouring to divest your self of all Self-love, offer it to God with an humble acknowledgement of your Ignorance and Blindness, and beseech him earnestly to give you the light of his Grace, to judge of this Motion, whether it comes from him, or some earthly Cause and selfish Consideration; and pray him also to give you those Graces as are necessary to the mortifying the vivacity of your Spirit, before you put any good Desire in Execution though sent from God himself; for such Works as are accompanied, or done with such Mortification are more grateful unto him than those which are done following the desires, and hastiness of our Nature. And this mortification of our Will doth generally

generally better please him than the work it self.

If thus you reject the desires that are not good, and do not rashly admit of those that are good before separating and repressing the mixt desires, and passions of your corrupt nature, the fortress of your Soul will be always in Peace and Security, from all disturbances without, and apprehensions, and self afflictions within; which troubles, though they seem very good, and to come from God; because they accuse you of some fault, yet they are oftentimes suggested by the Devil. The only way to know whence they proceed, is to examin their effects; for if they make you humble and quiet, and more diligent to do your duty, without lessening your confidence in God, then receive them as coming from him; but if they make you unquiet, pusillanimous, listless, unapt to good Works, and diffident of God, and above all, if they make you careless

Which is the surest way to remain in Peace.

lest to correct the faults they blame you for; be assured, that they do not come from God; but are suggested by the Devil, and therefore mind them not; but persist constantly in your accustomed devout Exercises, as if you did not at all feel any such suggestions.

CHAP.

CH A P. XVII.

*How the Devil by the means of
of good general Purposes en-
deavours to hinder progress in
Vertue.*

THE Devil also makes use of another Craft to deceive us; (to wit) the general purposes and desires, that we form in our Imaginations, against remote Enemies; and his address on this occasion, is the more to be feared in that while our Minds are taken up with this Imployment, he hinders us from making War with our nearest and most dangerous Enemies; which are those we have the most need to fall to work with, if we mean to overcome our selves; the neglect of this makes us fall into many disorders, as they must needs do; for we are continually wound-
ed,

The Devil suggests desires of fighting against former faults that you may neglect the present.

ed, and yet seek no remedy for our wounds: And while we thus take these purposes for real performances we fall into self complacency and secret Pride; for when we come upon tryal, we cannot so much as digest a hard word, or the least contradiction; yet when we are wrapt up in our high Contemplations, we can then make strange resolutions of enduring patiently for God's sake, all the torments of Martyrdom; and as our inferiour Nature, or Sensuality feels no repugnance to these things; because nothing actually troubles or grieves it; we very foolishly, and vainly imagin, that we are come to as high degree of perfection as those that have really undergone such violent Torments.

Therefore
you are to
fight actually
with your
nearest Enemies.

Wherefore if you would avoid this dangerous snare, resolve not only in your mind; but set your self resolutely to fight with those Enemies

Enemies that you find nearest, and most troublesome to you, and do most vigorously oppose you. And by this means you will plainly perceive the truth or falsehood of your Resolutions, and their Strength or Weakness: But as for those that do not actually molest you, I would not advise you to Combat with them, unless you apparently foresee that they are ready to assault you: For then you may lawfully, and profitably make good resolutions before hand; that you may have more strength and courage at the time of Battle.

Yet don't perswade your self, that by this preparation you have already conquered them, unless you had been a long time exercised in acts of Vertue, in which case, though you are not able to overcome some little defects, that God leaves in us many times, to preserve us in the humble acknowledgment of our own weakness; yet you may form resolutions of aspiring

And don't perswade your self that you are a Conqueror unless you are well versed in the acts of that Vertue.

aspiring to a higher degree of perfection.

Be not careless of small defects.

But whosoever is careless in striving against small defects, and yet thinks he can easily overcome the greatest, is very vain and presumptuous, and already fallen into the snare of the Devil.

Explication.
Three things
make our
designs fruit-
less.

I advise you here to take notice of three principal occasions, wherein our designs become generally fruitless; and our pious purposes fail of their desired effect, and this will teach you how to make good purposes as you ought.

Relying on
our own
Strength.

The first occasion (which has been also touched briefly before) is, that we ordinarily purpose to do a good Action, or to avoid the doing of Evil, trusting more in our own Strength, than in the assistance of God, and this pride (whence this deceit arises) so hoodwinks our Eyes, that we seldom, or not at all see it; and are there-
fore

fore justly permitted to fall into some Miscarriages, and fail of our Expectation, that we may thereby come to the true knowledge of our own nothingness, and learn to ground all our good designs upon the Goodness, Grace, and Power of God ; and not at all upon our own strength and endeavours.

Another occasion is, that when our Will enters upon a design, it wants force, and efficacy to go through with it ; it seems otherwise to us, because we are so fixed upon the beauty of that Vertue we aim at, without thinking upon the difficulty that is in the getting it ; that it is no wonder such ill grounded designs fall away, and come to nothing upon the first approach of an Enemy.

The want of Force to go through with them.

The third occasion is, that we do not direct our designs to their true and proper end, (to wit) the pure Service and Honour of God. For we make them many times in Sicknes

The not aiming them at the right end.

Sickness or Affliction, or in time of distress, and bitterness of Soul, rather to find thereby some Comfort in such Conditions, than only to please God ; who therefore lets us fall afterwards, that we may discern this deceit, and learn to our cost to aim in all our Actions, at his Holy Will and Pleasure.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

How the Devil strives to withdraw us from the way of Vertue.

THE Devil also makes Use of another Stratagem to draw us from the way of Vertue (as thus,) Suppose a Person falls into Sickness, and desires to support it with patience, the Devil (seeing that if he thus persevere, he will probably get the habit of that Vertue) puts into his mind several Thoughts and Desires, to do this or that good work, if he could once have his Health again, and that he could then serve God better, and be more useful to himself, his family and others; and these desires and conceits by little, and little increase to such a height, that they make him

Another deceit of the Devil,

exemplified in a Sick Person.

Falling into
Impatience
upon Pious
pretences.

And over
earnestly de-
sirs of
Health.

him at last weary and impatient of his Sufferings; as being thereby hindred from doing such Actions: And in proportion as his desires increase, his inquietude increases with them, and by degrees insensibly, his Sicknes which was intended as an Exercise of his Vertue, becomes altogether insupportable, not as a thing which is in it self displeasing to him; but as it is a hinderance to those good works, which he impatiently desires to do. Nor doth the Enemy rest here, but having brought the Sick person to this disposition, proceeds on farther to make him lose and forget the designs of such good works, as he would be about, if he had his Health, leaving in him only a Passionate desire of recovering his Health; and if this does not succeed accordingly, he falls into great sadness and impatience.

The remedy
is to admit of
no purposes
which you
cannot pre-
sently practise

The best remedy for this, is
when you fall under Sicknes, or
any other Affliction, take care to
admit

admit no desire into your mind, of any good you cannot then immediately put in Execution; otherwise you will be in great danger of falling into this unquietness and restlessness.

And you are in this Case to perswade your self with all patience, humility and resignation; that perhaps your intentions now would not have the effect you imagin; because you are much weaker than you think; or that God by his secret Judgments, unknown to you by reason of your Ingratitude, will not receive this good from you; but rather would have you humble your self under this present Affliction: and so if you should be hindred by this, or any other means, from following your own fancy, in your usual Devotions, and particularly from receiving the Holy Communion; trouble not your self with over-earnest desires, but endeavour wholly to resign your self to the

Because perhaps they would not have their effect.

Or that God would not receive them

Therefore trouble not your self when you cannot perform your desires.

G

Will

Will of God; saying, If there were not in me some great Ingratitude, and many defects; which God alone, who searches the Heart can see, I should not be now deprived of so great a blessing, as the receiving of the Blessed Sacrament. I desire therefore to acknowledge my own unworthyness; his Holy Name be ever Blessed and Praised. O my God, I place my whole confidence in thy Divine goodness, and hoping thou wilt accept of my Will, which I earnestly desire to Conform to thy Disposition. I here open to thee my Heart, ready to obey thy Holy command, disposed to do what ever thou pleasest; Enter into it I beseech thee, and give me courage and strength against my Enemies, and then do with me, O my dear Lord, as is most agreeable to thy Divine Majesty, and let thy sacred Will be now and always my only food and nourishment, since I desire nothing more, but to be

be purged and freed from all things that may displease thee; that I may be ready and prepared for thy coming, and willing to follow thy blessed Will in all things whatsoever.

If you faithfully observe this Rule, rest secure that all your good Desires, tho' they do not take effect, either by reason of your Weakness, or the opposition of your Enemy, or God himself not permitting it to try your resignation, will always give you occasion of satisfying your Duty to God in that manner which best pleaseth him; and this is the truest Service, and most acceptable Sacrifice you can offer to his Divine Majesty.

But rest secure that your good Will is acceptable to God.

But, I think it very convenient to give you here a Caution of another very dangerous and subtil Snare into which many thro' Self-love fall unawares; and this is by palliating and excusing their Im-

Another dangerous Snare.

Several pre-
ferences for
our Impati-
ence.

patience with Zeal for some Good; as a sick Person that is impatient at his Disease, says, his Impatience doth not proceed from the pain or trouble his Sickness causes him, but from his Displeasure at his bringing himself into it, or because in this Condition he is a great trouble to others, or because it hinders him from some necessary Business, or other charitable and spiritual Exercises.

But all un-
warrantable.

Thus he that is disappointed in his seeking Preferment and Offices, will tell you, when he complains, 'tis not for his own sake, or particular Interest he is so much concerned, but for the necessity of his Family and Friends whom he might then have been in a condition to have helped. But that such Men deceive themselves is apparent by this, that they are not much disturbed, when the very same things come to pass by some other means or persons, and when it has no regard to them in particular.

For

For Example, You say that your Sickness does not afflict you as to your own particular, but only that you are a burthen to those that are about you; Whence comes it then that when they have the same trouble in attending another sick Person, it scarce troubles you at all? From whence 'tis evident that the true Root and Source of your Impatience is in your self alone, and not from the love you had for your Neighbour, and one may say and find the same in many other Instances of this and the like nature.

As is explained by an Example.

To remedy this, I advise you as soon as you are apprehensive of any such Deceit, presently to separate the Pain which presseth upon you from those Circumstances which are pretended Excuses for your Impatience, and then reflecting upon the Pain alone, force your self to produce several acts of resignation to suffer it patiently and willingly. Thus you will

Explication.
The Remedy is to separate the Pain from the pretended Circumstances.

be able either to make a good Progress in Vertue, or at least to discover your own Defects whereof you were formerly ignorant.

Text.
Therefore
desire not to
be freed
from your
Cross.

I advise you also, if you are able to carry your Cross with Patience, never be anxious in desiring to be freed from it, for this desire brings with it two great Evils: The one is, that if it do not make you fall into Impatience, yet it disposeth you by little and little to it: The other is, that it diminishes your reward in the sight of God, who esteems an act of perfect Patience, (tho' short in respect to the Time) which is done with the total resignation of our Wills to his Divine Pleasure, more than a Service of a long continuance.

But conform
your Will to
God,

In this therefore, and in all your other Proceedings, let this be a general Rule; withdraw and purify your Mind from all other Desires and Requests, than those only
which

which are agreeable to the Will of God; for since there can nothing happen to you, except what comes by your own Fault, but will be agreeable to him, you will never be much afflicted or troubled, and you will be always in the way of Perfection, if you desire nothing but what is his Will. Take heed also that the lawful means, which are sometimes necessary to be used for the removing any pressing Afflictions, be not mingled with some private Interest of your own, that is, that your principal aim in making use of them be not so much to deliver your self from that Affliction, but simply because God would have you make use of them; and then you will not be so apt to be discontented if they should not have their effect.

especially upon using the lawful Means.

When the Devil perceives that we walk on warily in the true way of Vertue, so that his common Designs are not likely to take effect, he then transforms himself

Explication
How to oppose the Devil striving to deceive us with Indiscretion.

G 4 into

pressing us to
extraordina-
ry rigours.

into an Angel of Light, and solli-
cites us with delightful Thoughts,
flatters us with fine passages of the
Scripture, and examples of Saints,
that imagining we are already
clim'd up to the top of Perfe-
ction, we may fall more danger-
ously from the Precipice which he
would lead us to. To this end he
presseth us to extraordinary Fast-
ings, Abstinence, Watchings and
Zeal for little Matters, to puff us
up with Pride, as thinking we do
very much in using them, or to
destroy our Health that we may
become incapable of going on in
our Duty, and grow weary of our
spiritual Exercises, and become af-
terwards a Prey to our Enemies,
and greater Slaves than ever to
our wordly and carnal Pleasures,
which hath happened to very ma-
ny, whose Confidence and Pre-
sumption having set them on, and
brought them to the Conduct and
Violence of an indiscreet Zeal,
after that they had gone beyond
the strength of their Body, or vi-
gour

gour of their Minds by immoderate Severities, perished at last in their own Inventions, and so became Laughing-stocks to their Enemies, and brought a Scandal upon Religion.

Now tho' these voluntary Severities may sometimes be requisite to those who have strong Constitutions, provided they be accompanied with humility of Spirit, yet they must be always tempered and moderated by Discretion according to each ones Nature and Quality. Thus he that is not able to imitate the Austerities of some ancient Saints may be very capable of imitating their Vertues, by fervency in Devotion, frequency in Prayer, continually aspiring after the love of God, striving to get above the World and the Body, and loving Silence and Solitude, as much as his Condition and Circumstances will permit: He may be humble and affable to all, patient in suffering Affronts and Contradictions,

which tho' they may be sometimes good, yet must be tempered with Discretion.

Thus such as cannot imitate the Saints in austerity of life.

traditions, glad of the occasions to do good, even to his very Enemies, and finally resolve to perform the Will of God, and promote his Honour to the utmost of his power, and never to offend him in the least, for any temporal Pleasure or Profit.

May imitate
their Virtues.

All which inward Acts and Mortifications are far more pleasing to God, than the greatest macerations of the Flesh; and therefore my advice is, that you be very punctual in those things which your station obliges you to; but as for extraordinary matters, be rather backward and fearful than indiscreetly forward to set about them.

Yet take
heed of giving
way to deli-
cacies, &c.

Under pre-
tence of
Health, and
the better
doing your
Duty.

I speak not here to those delicate Christians, who are so much inclined to indulge themselves, and so over careful of their concerns in the World, and the preservation of their Health, under pretence of doing their duty, and
being

being thereby better able to serve God: For they strive to joyn two Capital Enemies together, the Flesh and the Spirit; but with manifest danger of their Souls, and great hindrance of their Spiritual growth. Discretion therefore must be the chief director in this matter, which must distinguish the diversity of Complexions and Conditions; since every one is not of the same temper, and all cannot be regulated by the same precept: this discretion and moderation is very necessary not only in outward affairs; but also in our pursuit of inward Vertues, as shall be further explained.

Discretion therefore is the best director in this matter of Mortification.

Tho a true Soldier of Christ that aspires after Perfection, must put no limits to his Spiritual profit, yet there are some heats of Spirit, which are very good to be cooled a little with the dew of discretion, especially that eagerness and fervour that is in Beginners: You are therefore to know, that Vertues

And also in the acquiring of Vertues.

are to be gotten by little and little, and by degrees; that they may take the deeper root in our Souls, and become more durable: For Example, if you are endeavouring after Patience; You are first to study how to bear Injuries and Afflictions; before you think to come to those higher degrees of delighting in them, and desiring them.

Which must
be done by
degrees.

And one by
one, rather
than many, or
all together.

To this end I advise you not to apply your self to obtain all Vertues or many together; but first and principally to practice one and then another. For by this means a Vertuous habit is more easily planted, and firmly fixed in your Soul: For by the continual Exercise of one Vertue at a time, the Memory is ready upon all occasions, the Understanding is studying new means and reasons to acquire it, and the Will is more Affectionately inclined to embrace it; than if they were employed about many, and

and one Vertue hath so great a conformity with another, that the implanting of any one, is the preparing the ground for all the others; and whosoever is a proficient in the practice of one vertue, is thereby in a very good way of purchasing another: Inasmuch that as one increases all the rest by the same means increases in our Souls; by reason of their inseparable nearness, connexion, and concatenation together, they being all beams proceeding from the same Sun, which is the divine light.

For the obtaining of any one, is a preparation to all the rest.

Besides those means formerly prescribed (in the 11. Chapter) for obtaining of vertues, I will here give you some brief and material advice concerning a matter of so great importance.

Further advice for the getting of vertue.

First it is very necessary for you to have a generous heart, great courage, and a strong and resolute will, being certain to meet with very subtile enemies, to wrestle with many.

1. You must have a great resolution to go through difficulties.

many difficulties and suffer many
Crosses and Contradictions.

2. You are to
have a great
love to ver-
tue.

2. In the next place you are to
bring with you a particular Inclination and Affection to vertue; which you cannot be without, if you truly consider how pleasing it is to God, how excellent in it self, how profitable and how absolutely necessary to the attaining of perfection.

3. You must
practice it up-
on all occasi-
ons.

3. Every morning make strong and efficacious resolutions and protestations to exercise your self according to the occasions which may probably that day be offered you, and sometimes in the day reflect upon your self, and examine the performance of your promise, and fervently renew your desires and intentions.

4. Apply all
your Exercises
so that end.

4: Apply all your actions, Spiritual Exercises, reading, prayer, and meditations for the obtaining that vertue you are in practice of.

5. En-

5. Endeavour so frequently to form acts of vertue both internal and external, that by use they may become as easie and natural to you, as were formerly their contraries, which were conformable to your vicious Inclinations.

5. From Acts thereof.

6. The sweet passages and Sentences of the Holy Scripture are of great force to this purpose ; and therefore it will be very convenient to get several of them by heart, relating to the vertue you aim at, and to repeat them often to your self especially upon those occasions, when you feel the passions and motions arising in you contrary to that vertue. For Example, if Patience be your vertue, reflect upon that of the Psalmist, *the patient abiding of the meek shall not perish for ever, Psal. 9. 18.* or that saying of Solomon, *He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that takes a City, Prov. 16. 32.* And that of our

6. Meditate often upon such Scriptures as concern and commend it.

our Saviour, Luke 21. 19. *in your patience possess ye your Souls, And in the Epistle to the Hebrews 12. 1. let us run with patience the race that is set before us.*

7. Make frequent use of Ejaculatory Prayer,

7. To the same purpose you may also make use of these Ejaculatory prayers; *When, O my God, shall I be armed and strengthened with patience to support cheerfully the crosses I meet with. How dear should those sufferings be to me which make me so like my meek Saviour, who has suffered so much for my sake; O Lord thou love of my Soul, how happy should I be, if in the midst of crosses and tribulations I could yet courageously give up myself to suffer more for thy glory? These and such like ejaculations and affectionate prayers have great power and force to excite us to vertue and ascend even to God in heaven, especially being assisted and accompanied with two wings, a true knowledg of the content our Lord takes in our practice of vertue and an earnest and longing desire*

which being added, with two wings will soar up to Heaven.

to

to obtain it because it is so pleasing to his divine Majesty.

And you must alwayes be sure of pressing forward in the practice of vertue, for if you grow negligent in the pursuit of it, it will necessarily follow that thro' the violent inclination of your sensual appetite, and the impulsive of outward Objects, unruly passions will be alwayes striving to regain their Dominion and will either quite destroy or at least much diminish the habit of Vertue you have gotten, and will besides deprive you of those manifold graces and gifts of God, which by your continuance and progress you might have infallibly obtained.

For the way of the spirit tending to perfection is very different from that of Earthly Travellers, who lose nothing in staying and diverting themselves by the way to redress their weariness, which

Above all things you are to make a continual progress.

is,

For by going
forward your
strength in-
creaseth.

is caused and increased by the continuance of their corporal motion ; whereas in this way of the Spirit the more you go on, the more your strength encreases; For the Inferiour part (which by it's resistance makes the way rough and painful,) is by this vertuous progress still more weakned; and the Superiour part (which is the habitation where vertue resides) is thereby fortified: So that by a continuance in well doing you still lessen the Contradiction, which you at first feel in your Journey and receive a certain Secret satisfaction in this happy conquest of your self.

Till you are
got up to the
Mountain of
Perfection.

Thus continuing in your design and marching alwayes forwards in your journey, you will with less pain and difficulty ascend the remaining steps and degrees of vertue, till at last you come to the top of the mountain, where you will then perform your pious exercises not only without contradiction,

on, but with much joy and content.
And having tamed and triumphed
over your irregular passions and
compleated the victory over your
self and all creatures, you will find
your self sweetly settled in the Bo-
som of the Divinity.

12. And to the attaining of this
habit of vertue think it not enough
to take the occasions that are of-
fered you to exercise your vertue
(as has been shewed in the ninth
foregoing Chapter) but seek them
out and joyfully lay hold of them,
tho' they seem never so little and
at a distance, especially such as are
contrary to your sensuality. To
this difficult task you may encou-
rage your self by these following
considerations, whereof one is,
that all such occasions are the pro-
portionate and probable (yea ne-
cessary) means for the acquiring of
vertue, insomuch that when you
demand of God the increase of
vertue, you also virtually desire
these occasions; else your prayers
would

You are also
to seek out
occasions of
practising
Vertue.

Especially
such as are
contrary to
your Sensua-
lities.

This being
the propor-
tionate means
to attain it.

would be presented in vain, and your heart would contradict your lips: Nay you might seem to tempt God by them, who ordinarily does not give patience without suffering, nor Humility without contempt or some outward humiliations; and this also is true in all other virtues, which are acquired by contrary accidents, whereby we best perceive our own wants, and therefore are more pressed to seek a remedy for them: And the more sensible we are on such encounters, the more strong and vigorous are the acts by which we endeavour at the virtues we stand in need of; you are therefore very much to esteem, and improve your self by, the least offered occasion, such as a cross look or contradicting word, which will ensure

ure you by degrees to bear with
patience much greater diffi-
culties.

The other Consideration is
(what has been formerly hint-
ed) to take all things that befall
you as comeing from Gods
providence for your particular
profit ; and tho' some of them
(as your own or other peoples
faults) can't be imputed to God
(who abhors all sin) yet they
may be referred to him, in as
much as he permits them, and
tho' he can, yet does not hinder
them : But all afflictions and
punishments whatever that
happen to us through our own
defects or the wickedness of
others are from God and his
divine Providence, to which
he concurs, and wills that we
endure them, and which he
would not Permit (since they
contain

And to take
all things
that befall
you, as com-
ing from Gods
Providence,
for your
particular
benefit.

and that you
may draw
good from
them.

contain a certain deformity so odious to his purity) but for the good we may draw from them and for other just reasons best known to his all knowing Majesty.

The mistake
of some re-
sisted.

Being therefore ascertained of the will of God in all your sufferings, and that he would have you willingly to support the afflictions that befall you either by others faults or your own, it follows that they are much mistaken who (to excuse their impatience) pretend that God wills not this or that, because he hates all evil; for what is this but to seek a cloak to cover their own imperfections and to refuse the carriage of that Cross which Christ has laid upon them.

To suffer voluntarily
from them
whom you
have obliged.

And I yet further assure you that the voluntary digestion of such difficultyes as come from
those

those persons you have obliged, is more valuable in the sight of God than of those which come from other accidents; because the Pride of our perverse nature is more suppressed by those than by any other, and suffering these with patience tends very much to the glory of God, by co-operating with him in that wherein his ineffable power and goodness so greatly appear; and this is in effect to draw from the poisonous nature of sin a precious balsam of vertue.

is to draw
Vertue from
Sin and Ma-
lice.

And beleive it (my dearly beloved) God no sooner discovers in your heart a lively and ardent desire of well doing, and a hearty and sincere desire of getting this glorious conquest, but he immediately prepares and presents you with violent temptations and harsh occasions, which you are to take & digest.

Receive therefore the bitter Cup mixt by your heavenly Physician, and swallow it cheerfully.

as he best knows and pleases; and therefore confident of his love, and careful of your own profit, receive them blindfold from his Fatherly hands, swallowing them down cheerfully, readily, and securely, even to the very last drop, as a medicine made by a Physician that is incapable of error, and whose ingredients, the bitterer they are, and the less relish and sweetness they give to your nature, the more profitable they are to your Soul.

How to make use of all occasions in the exercise of Vertue.

You have been already informed that the single practice of one vertue at once is more profitable than the laying out for them altogether, and that all occasions and occurrences tho' different in themselves, are to be directed to that end, now take this method for your easier and better proceeding therein.

It

It may fall out that oftentimes in the same Day or Hour, you may chance to be unjustly blamed or found fault with, for something which in it self rather deserves Praise and Commendation; that you may cause Anger by doing a good Action, or be murmured against for some small insignificant Matter; that your reasonable Demand may be harshly refused and rejected; that you are suspected, contradicted and reproached without Cause; that your Body is afflicted with Pain, or your Mind with Trouble and Melancholy; that you are employ'd in some peevish and ungrateful Affair; that your Diet is ill dressed; and in short, that you meet with many Crosses of this or the like Nature, on such inconsiderable Occasions, or perhaps in Matters of more difficulty to be supported, which we must never expect to be free from, while we are in this miserable Life.

In all occurring Accidents of Suffering,

Make Acts
of the Ver-
tue you
Practice;

As of Pa-
tience, —

Of Humility

Of Obedi-
ence,

In all which Accidents, tho' it be good to produce divers Acts of Vertue, conformable to the variety of the Subjects; yet following the Rule already prescribed, you are to exercise your self in such Acts as directly aim at that Vertue you are then in Practice of. As for Example, If at the time when these Occasions are offered, you are endeavouring after Patience, your way is then to form in your Mind Acts and Resolutions of enduring those particular Contrarieties with all Willingness, Joyfulness and Chearfulness. If your Vertue be Humility, that you are bent upon purchasing, acknowledge your self most justly deserving these and much greater Crosses and harder Usage. If Obedience and Subjection of your Will, be the Vertue you are labouring for, yield readily and submit your self to the Providence of God on this Occasion, offering not only to obey all reasonable Creatures, (if it be his pleasure) but courageously to bend and force your

your Will to all things that may any way disgust and displease you. If it be Poverty of Spirit, ^{of Poverty of Spirit,} content your self in the want of all worldly Comforts and Conveniences whatsoever: If it be Cha- ^{of Charity.} rity, produce Acts of Love both towards your Neighbour, as being instrumental to your purchasing of Virtue, and towards God as being the principal cause whence Crosses proceed (or at least are permitted to come upon you) for your spiritual Practice and Profit; and by this Doctrine here delivered, concerning the several Accidents that may daily befall you, you may easily learn how to behave your self and make Acts of the Vertue you are endeavouring after, on any Occasion of Sickness, Persecution or other Pressures, which are of longer continuance.

As for the Space of Time, ^{Concerning the time} which is to be employed in the Practice of each Vertue, it is not ^{you are to} for me to determine, but it must ^{stay in the} be regulated by the Condition, ^{Practice of each Vertue,} 'tis hard to ^{determine.}

Diligence and Necessity of each particular Person, and according to their greater or less Progress in the way of the Spirit, whereof none can be so competent a Judge, as he who is a discreet Guide, and knows the true State of their Souls.

Yet you may have some signs of your Progress; one is, if you are not out of Heart in Times of Dulness, &c.

But whoever will heartily settle himself to work with the Devotion and Diligence aforesaid, may without doubt make a great progress in a few weeks Practice; and take this for one certain sign of your Proficiency, If in the midst of Dryness, Darkness and Distresses of your Soul, when you feel your self bereaved of all spiritual Joy and Comfort, you have still Courage to go on in your virtuous Undertakings.

Another, if the Rebellion of your Sensuality be weakned.

Moreover the Contradiction of your Sensuality in the forming Acts of Virtue, will give you a sufficient Testimony; for the more that is weakned, the stronger and more solid will your Mind be. So that to find no reluctance in the inferiour Part, especially in sudden Tryals and Assaults, is a true

The Spiritual Combat.

true sign of having obtained the Virtue: And as far as your Actions are accompanied with a readiness and alacrity of Spirit, so far you have just reason to think you have made a good progress in this Exercise.

Yet never think your self a Conqueror.

Yet take heed of perswading your self that you are in full possession of any Virtue, or absolute Master of any one Passion, tho' perhaps you have not a long time, and after many sharp Tryals felt these rebellious Motions; for the deceit of the Devil, and the Corruption of your Nature may herein be too hard for you, since some things may be really a Vice, which secret Pride cloaths in the Habit of Virtue. And if you further seriously look upon the perfection to which God has called you, you will easily grant, that tho' you had made a much greater progress than you have in the way of perfection, yet you are scarcely entered upon the very borders thereof.

Because Vice may be cloathed in the habit of Virtue;

And you have yet much more to do.

Therefore
look for-
ward, upon
what you
yet want;

And I must here put you in mind that you are still to look forward, and advance on courageously towards those many Virtues you want, without reflecting back on the progress you have made, it being so little; for that is to be left to God, who truly searches and only knows the Hearts; who reveals this Secret to some, and conceals it from others, according to his Divine Knowledge of the Pride and Humility that will ensue thereon, and so as a loving and wise Father he takes away the danger from some, and gives others an occasion of encreasing their Virtue.

And pursue
your Exer-
cises with
Patience and
Constancy.

Wherefore let the pious Practitioner pursue his Exercises with Patience and Constancy, tho' he does not perceive his own progress, assuring himself that he shall in due time be sensible of it, when it pleases the Divine Providence for his greater good.

C H A P. XIX.

How our Enemy endeavours to make the Virtues we have acquired, instrumental to our own Ruin.

OUR subtle and malicious Adversary does not fail to tempt us, even by the Virtues we have acquired, that they may be an occasion of our Fall; so that flattering our selves with a vain Satisfaction at the attaining them, we are so raised with the conceit of it, that we are in danger of falling into the Precipice of Pride. To avoid this danger, fight always with firmness, and as it were encamped in the open Field; that is, stand firm in the true and humble acknowledgment of your self, that you are nothing, that you know nothing, that you

Our Enemies strive to make us take pleasure in our Virtues.

To avoid this snare persevere in the constant sense of your own Vileness.

can do nothing, and that you deserve nothing. Be therefore always upon your Guard, and take care to keep off from you all thoughts that may take away this knowledge of your self; for you ought to look upon them as Enemies that would destroy you, or at least wound you: And that you may the better comprehend the truth of this, observe this Rule.

To that end,
consider
only what
you have of
your self, and
not from
God.

1. What you
were from
Eternity.

2. What you
are in time
since you had
a Being.

As often as you reflect upon your self, consider only what is your own, and not what you have receiv'd from God, or of his Grace; after this, esteem your self such as you find you are, with what you have only of your self. If you consider the time before you were born, you will see that during the whole extent of Eternity you have been but a meer Nothing, and that you neither did, nor could do any thing to have a Being: If you think upon the time afterwards, wherein by the pure Goodness of God you enjoy this Being, and consider only what is yours, and leave to God what is his,

his, which is, that infinite Providence whereby he conducts and supports you, what are you then also but a meer Nothing? Hence it is certain, that in this first Being, considering your self simply with what is yours, you can have no reason to esteem your self, or desire others should think well of you.

And as to the State of Grace ^{3. What good you can do of your self.} you are in, and Ability to do good: Is your Nature of it self capable of doing the least good, if deprived of the assistance of God? If in this second Being you ^{4. What Evil you have or might have done.} reflect upon all the Evils you have done, and those you might have done to this time, if God of his great Mercy had not withheld you, you will easily acknowledge that your Crimes would have been multiplied to a prodigious number and height, not only by reason of the number of Days and Years, but also of the multitude of your wicked Actions and vicious Inclinations; so that you might have been even like the Devil himself:

H 5 Whence

So that you
may justly
think your
self the worst
of Men;

Whence you may well conclude,
that if you will not attribute that
to your self which is wholly ow-
ing to the Mercy and Goodness of
God, and not esteem your self o-
therwise than as you are in your
self, you ought to think your self
a greater Sinner every day than
other.

And be just
in your ac-
culation.

But take heed that this Judg-
ment of your self be accompanied
with Justice; otherwise it may
be very prejudicial: For tho' by
this Knowledge you have got of
your own Misery and Nothing,
you have some advantage of a Per-
son, that through his Ignorance
thinks himself to be Something,
and would have others esteem so
of him; Nevertheless you will
fall into a greater Fault, and be
more guilty, if you pretend to
pass in the esteem of Men for that
which you know you are not. To
the end, therefore that the know-
ledge of your Vileness and Base-
ness may be sincere, and render
you acceptable to God, you are
not only to acknowledge your self
to

to be Wicked and Sinful, but also behave your self as such a one, treat your self as such, and wish to be accounted and used by others after that manner that is most suitable to that thought of your self: As, refusing all Honour, bearing patiently with Affronts and ill Usage, condescending upon all occasions to the meanest Employments, and all out of this intention to Humble and Exercise your self, not out of Pride and Vanity of appearing humble as some may do it.

And not only acknowledge your own baseness, but use your self accordingly.

But if it happen sometimes that for your Virtue or any good Works, wherein God vouchsafes to make you an Instrument, you should be concerned, or begin to be beloved or praised by others, keep diligently within your self, and let nothing perswade you to let go this certain Truth and Justice, that I have been speaking of: But turn your Heart to God, and say to him, *Never suffer me O my God to attribute to my self any thing which is only due to thy goodness;*
and

And keep close to this especially, when you are praised or commended.

and afterwards reflecting upon the Person that praised you, say within your self, *Why does this Man think me good, when there is none good but God only?* If you take this Method, and conduct of your self, and resign and leave to God that which belongs to him, you will be in the better disposition to receive more of his Graces.

But lest the memory of your good Actions should puff you up with Vanity, consider them well, and you will find the best of them very imperfect;

But lest the Remembrance of the good Actions you have done, should endanger your being list-ed up with Vanity, if you look well into the very best of them, you will find how miserably you have failed with a faithful Correspondence in the Grace of God in doing them, and how far they were from being accompanied with that Diligence, Perfection and purity of intention they ought. So that upon the whole, when they are Impartially considered, you will have reason rather to be ashamed and confounded, than puffed up with Pride and Complacency; for it

is very certain, that the Graces and Gifts of God are very much sullied by our Imperfections in the use of them: Besides, if you raise your Minds to the Meditation of the excellency and greatness of God, and the Service that is due to so divine and holy a Majesty, you will have little cause to glory before him, tho' your Actions had been much more excellent and better than they were; but rather to accuse your self for your negligence and deficiency of Duty, and in the posture of a trembling Penitent to beg Pardon for what's amiss; saying, *Lord be merciful to me a Sinner*: Or if you also compare your Works with those of other Saints and holy Men, you may then more plainly perceive the meanness of the best of your Actions.

And that you have no colour to glory in them;

But to accuse your self for want of Duty.

Learn therefore Humility, and acknowledge your self with all the good you have done to be but a meer Nothing and unprofitable Servant; this is the best and true Foundation to build all other Ver-

Learn therefore Humility, &

which is the Foundation of all Vertues.

ties

tues upon; and the deeper you lay this Ground-work, the higher you'll be able to raise your spiritual Building; but never think you can dig deep enough, but be always striving still to get a deeper sense of your own Unworthiness.

And without it all of them will signifie little.

The Practice of this Self-knowledge is of such Importance, that without it all the good that you do will signifie little, tho' you were able to attain the Knowledge of the greatest Mysteries, or do Miracles; so that this Point is never to be pressed or inculcated too much.

And it is the best way of praising, finding and pleasing God.

If therefore you desire to praise God, accuse your self; if you would exalt his Divine Majesty, dive into your own Misery; if you seek to find him, climb not up into Heaven, but descend into the Abyss of your own Nothing, and he will come thither to you and Embrace you; yea, he will Communicate himself and his love the more freely and sensibly, the more you seem abject and vile in your own Eyes, and are pleased to

to have others slight you and despise your Company, as a poor, miserable worthless Creature, and object of their Scorn and Derision. Consider further, what a Favour and Honour this is, that God does you in suffering you to be neglected and slighted by this World, since that is the true Mark of his Children; and therefore fail not to return him your humble and hearty Thanks, and think your self beholding to those that are such excellent Instruments of subduing and mortifying you Pride.

Therefore you are obliged to him for permitting you to be despised.

And to them that do it.

But if notwithstanding all these Considerations, the subtilty of the Devil, your own Ignorance or evil Inclinations, should have still the Power over you, to disquiet and trouble your Mind with Thoughts and Fancies of Vanity, and make some Impressions of your own Merits and Defects; then you have the more reason courageously to strive against, beat down, and humble your self, since you find by woful Experience, how poor a Progress you have

And be always aware in this Point, of the Devil and your own Inclinations.

have made in the way of the Spirit and Knowledge of your self, and what deep Roots of Pride and Vanity you have still remaining within you.

Of rash Judgment.

Rash Judgment
springs
from Self-
esteem.

And from
Pride.

The Devil
strives to
keep open
our Senses
upon our
Neighbour's
Actions.

From Self-esteem, commonly arises rash Judgment concerning our Neighbour, and is followed by contempt of their Persons and Detraction from their good Name. This Vice has its beginning and nourishment from a peevish and proud Inclination; for Pride and rash Judgment grow together, comply with each other and concur insensibly to deceive us; for we take occasion to exalt our selves by judging meanly of others, and we think our selves free from those Imperfections that we are fully persuaded are in our Brethren.

And the Devil no sooner discovers this perverse Disposition in us, but he is busie to keep our Senses open to see, hear, examine and aggra-

aggravate the Faults of our Neighbours, and to imprint this Imperfection or that Indiscretion of them in our Minds. Be therefore very diligent to avoid his Snares; and when anothers Defects are presented before you, presently withdraw your Thoughts; but if you are solicited to give your Judgment, let it be a flat Denial and short Answer, That you have no such Power given you, or if you had any such Priviledge, you could hardly tell how to make a right and sound Judgment, being prevented and prejudiced by so many Passions, that would be apt to byass you from that true Moderation, as would become you on such an Occasion.

But we must be vigilant to shun his Snares.

First by denying to give our Judgment.

Secondly, Let the sense of your own Wants and interiour Necessities, so take up your Leisure Time and Thoughts, that seeing how necessary it is to look homewards and keep about your own Affairs, you may think you have little time left to spend idly in roaving Abroad, when you have scarce

Secondly, by looking homeward upon our own selves.

where we
may find
some Root
of the same
Fault, we
blame in
them.

scarce enough to employ about what concerns your self so much. And this serious Search into your own Wants, will clear your Soul of those ill Humours, that are hovering about it, and apt to breed that dangerous Distemper: And it is ten to one, but you may find in your own Heart a Root of the very same Bitterness you see so plainly in your Neighbour, which is the Reason perhaps it so easily makes such Impression upon yours. When you therefore feel an itching Desire of censuring another's Fault, fall out with your self as if you were equally guilty; and say, *Is it possible that I, who am so miserable, not only because I wallow in the same Mire, but am also full of greater Faults and Imperfections, should notwithstanding be so Proud and Presumptuous as to take upon me to Judge another?* Thus the Weapons that were pointed at your Neighbour, having pierced your own Heart, may abate and bring down the Swellings thereof. •

But

But when the Fault that is done is manifest, then excuse it with a Charitable Construction, and pi-
only conclude that your Brother has many hidden Virtues and Perfections for the preservation whereof he is thus permitted to fall, to humble him for a time, that he may be afterwards raised to a higher Degree of perfection and favour in the sight of God. But if his Sin be not only manifest but scandalous, and proceed from a perverse and obstinate Heart, turn your Thoughts to Gods secret Judgments and you will find some, who outwardly have appeared very notorious Sinners, yet afterwards have shewed very ardent signs of Holiness, and died very excellent Christians; and others, who were thought to have arrived to the top of Perfection, have fallen away to nothing. It is your part therefore to tremble at the proceedings of Divine Providence, and to remain always careful and fearful of your own Condition, not intermeddling with that

If the Fault be manifest, put a charitable Construction upon it:

If Scandalous, have recourse to God's secret Judgments;

And tremble at the proceedings of his Providence.

that of others, which is so far out of the reach of your knowledge.

And know
that all Cha-
rity pro-
ceeds from
God's Spirit;

Lastly, believe this for a certainty, that all the good and charitable Constructions you put upon your Neighbours Actions are the assured effects of the Holy Spirit; and that all Contempt, rash Censures, and bitterness of Mind against them are derived from your own corrupt Nature, and the

And all bit-
terness from
our Corrupt
Nature and
the Devil.

Devils Suggestions. Therefore suffer not any impressions to rest upon your Soul, as Glance any ways at your Brother's Imperfections, and shut not your Eyes to Sleep, before you have excluded such Thoughts from your Heart.

*The Means to defend our selves against
the Attempts of our Enemies at the
time of Death.*

The way to
be Conque-
rours at our
Death.

Tho' the whole Course of our Lives be a continual Warfare, yet the most signal and important Day of Battle is the Day of our Death; and whosoever is conquered in that last and inevitable Skirmish,

re-

remains helpless of Victory to all Eternity. Therefore that you may then be ready to bear that fatal brunt with constancy, fall Courageously upon your Enemies beforehand; for he that is a valiant Soldier in his life time, is most likely to be a Conqueror at the hour of his Death, as having by long Experience got the true use of his Weapon.

Is to fall upon our Enemies beforehand.

You must endeavour also to make Death familiar to your Thoughts, by often serious Meditation and Discourse about it, which will much abate the fear of it, when it comes, and you'll be the freer to resist the Assaults that will be made upon you at that time: The Lovers of the World do not care to hear of this Doctrine, because it hinders them in the Career of their Pleasure, which they pursue with so much Passion and Affection, that it is their greatest Affliction when they are forced to leave it. But you, my dearly Beloved, make timely preparation for a matter of so great Importance.

Therefore study to be familiar with it;

And make timely Preparation for it.

portance, and to that end withdraw your Thoughts from the World, and imagine your self often to be alone, Helpless and Comfortless, struggling hand to hand with Death; and represent to your Soul those things that you conceive may then most assist you; and consult daily with your own Heart to remedy all things before it be too late; that you may readily make use thereof in your latest and greatest Necessity: For that which must be acted, and can be but once acted, ought in all reason to be very exactly studied beforehand, lest a Fault be committed, which can never be redressed

Of three Assaults of our Enemies upon our Death-beds.

Our subtle Enemy ordinarily makes the strongest opposition when we are in the weakest Condition, especially upon our Death-beds, by assaulting us three several ways (*viz.*) with Temptations against our Belief, with Despair, and with Vain Glory.

The First against our Faith.

As to the First, when the Devil sets upon you to unsettle and throw down your Faith with false Argu-

Arguments, do not then dispute with them; for your Reason will then perhaps be too weak to oppose them; but rather calling to mind the Principles that the Church teaches you, and are warranted by the Scriptures, resolve upon no account to part with them, but turning your Heart to God, say, *Lord I believe, help my unbelief.* Stand therefore firm upon your ground, and never yield to any Reasons that are suggested, and if he seems too subtle for you in alledging Authorities of Scriptures, that appear very clear and evident against the Articles of your Faith, assure your self that they are corruptly or falsely quoted, ill applied or wrong interpreted, and therefore hearken not to them, but Humble your self the more before God, and Cry earnestly to him to preserve you when you are so little able to help your self.

The remedy is to retreat from your Understanding to your Will.

And give no Answer to your Enemies Questions.

And above all things, keep your Mind and Heart as much fixt as you can upon the Contemplation of

But to fix your Thoughts upon Christ Crucified.

of your Crucified Saviour, and as if he was present with you, discourse often with him and say, *O my God, O my Saviour, come speedily to my help, leave me not in this my Necessity, let me not fall from the Truths thou hast taught me, and grant that as I now desire to live in them, so I may constantly die in them to thy Glory, and my Eternal Comfort.*

The Second
Assault is
Despair.

Where you
are to keep
close to this
Rule.

Secondly, Another of the Devils Designs then is to cast us down into Despair, upon the thoughts of our former wicked Lives: In which danger keep close to this Rule, that all Reflections upon our Sins, if they be followed with Humility, and true Sorrow for having offended so good a God, and with a firm Confidence in his goodness, are then good and proceed from the Grace of God; but if they disquiet your Mind, make you doubtful and distrustful, peevish and fearful, assure your self they are plainly the Effects of Satan's Suggestions; for tho' the Hainousness or Ingratitude

itude of your Sins be such, as to make you think you justly deserve to be Eternally damned for them, and have little reason upon that account to hope for Salvation; yet never let them take away your Hope and Confidence in the mercy of God, through Jesus Christ. Humble your self therefore often under the sense of your Sins, but withal acknowledge the infinite Love and Goodness of God to you; which will be the Means to Confound and Conquer your Enemy with his own Weapons, which he had prepared for your Destruction.

And to have a perfect hope and humble confidence in God,

So when the Vileness of your Sins is presented before you, hate them as much as you can, being so odious in the sight of God; yet be sure not to lose a stedfast Hope in his Promises, tho' such Passages of Scripture should come into your Mind, as declare his Terrors and Threatnings, and that you perhaps are one of those that God has cast away; for all such are

I plainly

And never to distrust his Mercy,

plainly the Temptations of the Enemy, to make you leave off your Repentance; therefore at such times you may humbly say, *Thou hast just Reason, O my Lord and Saviour, to shake me off for my Sins; but if thou shouldst be extreme to mark what is done amiss, who can abide? But with thee there is Mercy and plenteous Redemption; therefore tho' I deserve indeed to be damned, if thou shouldst deal with me according to my Wickedness, yet thou hast redeemed me by thy Son's most precious Death and Passion, and therefore I will never let go my Hopes in thy Mercy, for thou wilt save me, O my Redeemer, for thine own Glories sake; and upon this Assurance, I freely resign my self into thy Hands, do with me and dispose of me as thou best pleatest, for thou art my God: Tho' he kill me yet will I put my Trust in him.*

And the
Merits of
his Passion.

The third
Assault, is of
vain Glory,

The third Assault the Devil may make upon you, is vain Glory and Presumption; and here you are to be equally wary of the other Extreme, and never to admit wil-

willingly of the least Content or Complacency in your self or any good Actions you have done, but to refer all the Goodness that seems to be in you, purely to the great Mercy of God, and the Merits of Christ's Passion; abase your self to the very bottom of your Heart, as long as there is the least Breath in your Body, and acknowledge God to be the true Fountain of all your Goodness; look not at all upon your own deserts, but rely wholly upon his Mercy; distrust your self and trust in your Saviour, and think what poor Provision you have made against this Passage of your Death and Journey to Eternity; and how Vain and Useless all your endeavours will prove, unless God will be pleased to put his helping hand and cover you under the sacred Wings of his divine Protection.

4. These are the common and ordinary Stratagems which our Enemies make use of in this last Passage of our Life, with many other sorts of Temptations ac-

I. 2

cording

which is
conquered
by distrust
of your self
and trust in
God.

according to each ones particular Inclination and Disposition. Stand therefore timely to your Arms, before this great day of Battle steal upon you, and fight valiantly while you are in Health against all your violent Passions and dangerous Imperfections, that you may be prepared at that time, lest you may never afterwards have either Time or Power to perform it; for there is no Work or Understanding in the Grave, whither we are going.

C H A P. XX.

That we must never flatter our selves, that we have wholly subdued our Enemies; but often return to the Exercise of Virtue, as if we were beginning again.

I have yet one thing more to put you in mind of, which is, that you never persuade your self that you have gotten an entire Victory over any of your Passions, tho' perhaps for a long time together you have felt no Motions thereof; but that you often renew your accustomed spiritual Exercises as if you were but a young beginner, newly entering upon a Christian life.

Never persuade your self you have gotten a full Victory,

But often renew your Exercises.

For Perfection is very high and hard to be obtained.

For if we consider, and desire to follow the Perfection God has called us to, we shall find it to be so high and hard to be attained, that after our best endeavours and great successes, we shall scarcely presume to say we have made any considerable progress therein; and besides, that which seems to us a Virtue, may indeed be sometimes a Vice, our Judgment being deceived or byassed by some secret Passion or Inclination.

C H A P. XXI.

Of Prayer.

WE have hitherto by the Grace and Assistance of God treated of the distrust of our selves, Confidence in God, and continual Exercise; three necessary means to overcome our Passions, and conquer the disordered Motions of our sensual Desires. It remains now that we speak of the fourth, which is Prayer, which we may say is not only the most powerful, but the only means of obtaining from God all manner of Good.

The fourth
weapon is
Prayer.

For Prayer is the Food, the Comfort and Support of the Soul during its Pilgrimage upon Earth: It is a secure Bridge for it to pass over the several Seas of Adversity and Prosperity: It is a defence against

A further
Description
of Prayer.

gainst Vices and Temptations : A Key that opens for us a Way to Heavenly Treasures : A Door of Holy Thoughts ; and lastly, an invincible Fortress, and sure Refuge and place of retreat from the violent Assaults of our Enemies.

Which must have these Properties.

First, a Desire to serve God.

How to obtain this Desire.

But to the end, your Prayer may be very efficacious and agreeable to God, observe carefully these four Things. First, your Heart must be enflamed with an ardent Desire of serving God after that manner which will be most acceptable to him.

To obtain this enflamed desire, consider that Almighty God, by reason of his admirable Excellencies of Goodness, Majesty, Wisdom, Beauty, and other infinite Perfections, is most worthy to be served and honoured by you and all Creatures : That to serve and help you, his Greatness has condescended to compassionate your Weakness and Necessities ; and to suffer for you in his sacred Humanity for many Years together,

ther, in which time his Goodness provided such Remedies to cure your diseased Soul, and purge it from the Filthiness of Sin; that he did not spare to shed his most precious Blood, and at last underwent a most Cruel and Ignominious Death upon the Cross for your sake. That his Wisdom has also procured the most effectual Means to recover you from the slavery of Sin, to enable you to master your self, to conquer your Enemies, and to become a Child of God, by being partaker of a Divine Nature.

Secondly, You must believe with a firm and lively Faith, that God will give you all that is necessary for his Service, and your Salvation. Secondly, a lively Faith.

This holy Confidence is the Vessel, which the Divine Goodness fills with the Treasures of his Graces; and the greater it is, the richer and the more laden will your Prayer return into your own Bosom. For how can our most gracious God fail to make us

The Excellent Virtue of Faith.

partakers of all good Things, when he himself has commanded us to ask them, and promised his Holy Spirit to those that are importunate with him for it with Faith and Perseverance ?

Thirdly,
Conformity
to God's
Holy Will.

Thirdly, You must come to Prayer with an intention of doing the Will of God, and not your own Will, whether it be in demanding or receiving what you ask for ; (That is to say) that you make your Prayer and Desire to be heard, because you hope it is his Pleasure ; in short, your intention ought to be to conform your Will to the Will of God, and not to oblige God's Will to condescend to yours.

Because
your Will is
subject to
Error.

And this you are to do so much the rather, because your Will being infected with Self-love, is subject to Error and Forgetfulness of it self, and its true Good, and so knows not what it asks : But the Divine Will is always accompanied with unspeakable Goodness, and so can never fail, but is the Rule and chief Director of all other

But the Di-
vine Will is
infallibly
right.

ther Wills, deserving to be followed and obeyed by them all. You are therefore always to Petition for those things which are conformable to God's Will ; and when you suspect whether some Desire of yours be truly such, to make your demand Conditional ; and not to wish for it so as to be anxious about it, but only so far as it pleases God you should obtain it.

Fourthly, In the fourth and last place, that your Prayer and the aforefaid Exercises be so joyned together, that they be wholly inseparable, and that they never go one without the other ; for tho' you pray never so long nor so much for any Virtue, unless you strive and labour and exercise your self in the way to get it, this would be rather a tempting of God than praying to him.

Fourthly, a
Conjunction
with the
former Ex-
ercise.

Fifthly, Remember that before you demand new Favours, you are to render humble Thanks for those you have formerly received, by these or the like Expressions.

Fifthly,
Thanksgiv-
ing for Fa-
vours re-
ceived.

O my good and gracious Lord God, who hast made me, redeemed me, and rescued me from so many Dangers oftner than I my self know or can conceive: Help me now also, and deny not to grant this my present Petition, tho' I have been hitherto rebellious to thy Will, and ungrateful to thy Goodness.

And if your demand be for some particular Virtue you now stand in need of, by reason of some Temptation, Trouble or Contradiction that presseth you, forget not to thank him for that occasion of your Tryal and Exercise, which through his gracious Assistance may promote so much your Spiritual Good.

Sixthly, Reflection upon God's Goodness and Promise;

And Christ's Passion.

Sixthly, Since Prayer hath its whole force, power and hope of Effect from God's Goodness and Mercy, from Christ's Merits and Passion, and from the Divine Promise, therefore you may very properly introduce your Requests by some of these following Sentences. O my God, grant unto thy Servant, I beseech thee, this Grace,
for

for thy infinite Goodness sake. Let thy most dear Sons Merits prevail with thee to grant my Petition. Remember thy Beloved Son in whom thou art always well pleased. Think upon thine old loving kindness, and for thy Promise sake, O Lord incline thine Ears to my Petition.

Seventhly, You are to pray with Perseverance; for if the continued importunity of the Widow in the Gospel did at last move the hard-hearted Judge to give her what she asked; how much more reason have we to expect the Answer of our perseverant Petition from him who is Mercy and Goodness it self?

After your Prayer, have a lively and unshaken Hope, that God of his Infinite Goodness will grant you the Grace you have demanded of him, or something better for you, or both together; and tho' you are a good while without perceiving the effects of your Prayer, yet remain constant in your Hopes, and never for that grow

Seventhly,
Perseverance.

Prayer must
be strengthened with
Hope:

grow negligent either in your Prayer or Exercise.

And be not discouraged though God seems to reject your Prayer.

And tho' it may seem sometimes as if God rejected you and your Prayer together, yet let not this discourage you, but humble your self still more and more before him, labouring to stir up and increase your Faith, and Comfort your self, by your Saviour's Promises to those that persevere: Nay, provided you stand firm and constant in such violent Repulses as it were, and seemingly despising your Prayer, you will be more pleasing to him, and procure afterwards the greater Favours from him: Therefore you

are always to be thankful, and thank him as well when he grants as when he denies.

praise him as well when you fear he has not heard you, as if you had obtained what you had asked; and in all Events whether good or bad, humbly submit and resign your self to the infallible Wisdom of his Providence, acknowledging that he is always equally Good, Wise and full of Love to you.

C H A P. XXII.

*What inward Mental Prayer is,
and how to make use there-
of.*

Mental Prayer is an Elevati-
on of the Mind to God, with an Actual or Virtual demand of what we desire: We may call that Virtual Petition, when lifting up the Mind to God to obtain some Grace, we humbly represent and lay before him our Necessities, without saying, or specifying any thing else; as when I raise my Mind to God, and there in his Presence I acknowledge that I have no power to do any Good, nor defend or deliver from any Evil. This Confession made after this manner before God is a Prayer, which virtually demands what we stand in need of.

Mental Prayer includes always either a Virtual Petition of something.

And

And this implies an humble supplication to his divine Majesty, that he will vouchsafe to supply my Necessities. And the more real and manifest this Confession of your own Want and Weakness is, the more efficacious your Desire, and the more lively your Confidence, the more force and value will your Demand have.

There is also another kind of virtual mental Prayer, which consists in a simple beholding of God in our Minds, continuing silent and quiet in his Presence without Words or Expressions, expecting as it were and waiting upon him for his Grace and the Accomplishment of what we before have actually demanded. In short, we this way present to God the Temple of our Souls empty, to the end he may possess and fill it with himself, his Gifts and Graces, which he will not fail to do; and withal, cleanse, purifie and richly adorn it, making it fit for such a Guest.

And

And who-ever will set himself to learn and practise this way of Prayer, and frequently make use of it and persevere in it, will soon find the Excellency, Nobleness and high Advantages of it, it being the best Defence against all sorts of Temptations, the most efficacious way of settling and composing our distracted Minds, of subduing and rooting up our Passions, and the true and most solid Means of attaining all manner of Virtues.

The excellency of this manner of Prayer;

Actual Petition is made when we ask any Grace of God by Words expressed in the Mind, in this or the like manner: *Lord, I beseech thee, give me this Grace, this Benefit, for the honour of thy Name.* Or thus, *O Lord, I steadfastly believe it is thy Will, I should beg of thee this Grace I so much stand in need of. Do thou therefore, O Lord, make me partaker of it, and accomplish thy holy Will in me.*

Or an actual asking by Words, expressed in the Mind.

Some-

Sometimes you may represent to him the Dangers you are in from the Malice of the Devil: sometimes the miserable Root of Sin, that remains and is so powerful in you. Add thereto your weakness and inability to resist them; saying thus, *Lord consider mine Enemies how many they are, how they bear a tyrannous hate against me; my Soul melteth for heaviness, strengthen thou me according to thy word: As for me I am poor and needy, hast thee unto me, O God: Thou art my helper and deliverer, make no long tarrying, O my God.*

Psal. 25.

Psal. 119.
28, 40, 17.

C H A P. XXIII.

How to joyn Meditation to Mental Prayer.

WHen you have leisure to set your self to Prayer for a good space of time, as for an Hour or more, you may begin your Prayer with the Meditation of the Life and Passion of our Saviour Jesus Christ, applying always his Actions to the Virtues you desire to obtain: For Example, Suppose the Grace you would obtain be the Virtue of Patience, and that you would take for the Subject of your Meditation, some part of the Mystery of the Sufferings of Jesus Christ; consider how Barbarously they tore away his Garments from him, how Cruelly they thrust a Crown of Thorns upon his Head, how he was nailed to the

Take some Points of Christ's Death and Passion,

And apply each Passage to the Virtue you demand: As for Example to Patience.

the Cross as an innocent Lamb, and afterwards lifted up into the Air with unspeakable Pain of his Wounds, and new Anguish to his whole Body, as you may read it in the 26th of *Matthew*.

To these or the like Points, you may first apply your Senses to feel, and see the Wounds tearing, the Pain and Torment that your dear Saviour suffered in these Passages in each part of his Body in particular, and in all of them in general: Then pass on afterwards to the Consideration of his most holy Soul, endeavouring as much as you can, to conceive and penetrate into the Patience and Meekness wherewith he endured all these grievous Afflictions and Torments, and how ready he was to suffer much more for his Father's Glory and Our Salvation. After this, behold him hanging on the Cross, compleating all his Suffering with his Death; think your self just by him, and contemplate him, and consider with what ardent de-

Consider
how meekly
he suffered;

desire he did all this for you, that you by his Example, might endure with Patience the small Crosses and Adversities that befall you; and as he prayed to his Father for you, so you should implore his Grace to bear and overcome this Cross you now labour under, or any other, with quietness and constancy, thus raising and strengthening your Mind with full resolution to suffer it, turning your Heart to God the Father, humbly begging of him the Virtue of Patience, and that he will be pleased to remember the strong Cries and Prayers of his Son, on the Cross for you.

And learn thereby to suffer patiently your smaller Crosses.

And compel your will to take them up quietly.

C H A P. XXIV.

*Another way of helping your
Prayers by Meditation.*

To Pray
and Medi-
tate toge-
ther.

By consider-
ing Christ's
Merits, and
the Content
his Heavenly
Father took
in his Obe-
dience :

YOU may also Pray and Medi-
tate after another manner ;
as thus, When you have well con-
sidered the Suffering and Labours
of Jesus Christ, and have ap-
plied your self to get a sense of
them, to have a fellow-suffering
with him, and you have endea-
voured to imprint upon your
Mind the Magnanimity and Cou-
rage, the Love and Affection with
which he went through them ;
you may pass on from these ex-
cessive Pains and great degrees of
his Patience, to Two other Con-
siderations : First, Of the Merits
of your Saviour. And Secondly,
Of the Content and Satisfaction
that his eternal Father received
from

from the perfect Obedience of his Son; and representing all these things to the Father of Mercies, earnestly beseech him and confidently hope from him, for the sake of his Son's Merits, the Grace you so much desire; and thus you may put up your Petitions, not only after Meditating upon any Mystery of Christ's Passion, but also upon any other Action or Suffering of our Saviour's Life.

And presenting them both to God.

C H A P. XXV.

How to Meditate upon the Passion of Jesus Christ, to excite in us Holy Affections.

Hitherto I have shewed you the manner of Praying and Meditating upon the Passion of our Lord, to obtain his Graces. Now I will instruct you how you may thereby

How to en-
kindle Holy
Affections
in Meditat-
ing on the
Passion;

thereby stir up and enkindle many other good Motions and holy Affections in your Soul, whereof I shall here mention some; as for Example; you propose to Meditate upon our Saviour's being Crowned with Thorns; you may then think thus with your self; how your most Amiable and Innocent Lord Jesus was in Contempt and Derision, cloathed with a Purple Coat; how his Head, which ought not to have been looked upon without Reverence and Respect, was Crowned with sharp Thorns, beaten with hard Canes, and besmeared with filthy Spittle. How this King of Eternal Glory, who is adored in Heaven by so many thousands of Angels, was mocked, laught at and disgraced, while he was upon Earth by the feigned and false Reverences, that the insolent Rabble paid him out of Derision.

By reflecting
upon Christ's
Love and
Goodness.

To excite in you by these and such like Meditations, true motions and feelings of Love; Elevate your Heart often in the midst of them,

them, to consider and get a more perfect Knowledge of the infinite Goodness of God, and his Love towards you, in being willing to undergo so many Torments to save you, and consequently endeavour to enflame your Heart more and more with his Divine Love: The Consideration of so much Love and Goodness, will be also very apt to melt you into Grief, and true Contrition for having so often offended this your most Merciful and Bountiful Lord and Saviour, who so readily suffered all imaginable Affliction for your Sins.

To raise also a firm Hope in your Soul by such Meditations, consider that it was the dearly Beloved Son of God that imbraced so many Miseries, and was reduced to such Extremities to free you from the slavery of Sin, and the Power of the Devil, to reconcile you to his Eternal Father, that you might have Confidence to come to him in all your Necessities.

How to get
a constant
Hope,

K

And

And a Spirit-
tual Joy:

And if you would further by Meditating upon your Saviour's Passion, move your self to Spiritual Joy, draw your Thoughts from the Consideration of his Sufferings, and pass on to the benefit, profit, and effects thereof, that they are not only sufficient to wash away your Sins, but also the Sins of the whole World; that they appease the Anger of God, overthrow the Dominion of Satan, take away the sting of Death, recover Lost Man, and supply the places of fallen Angels: Add to all this the Joy of the Sacred Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and of the whole Church, Militant and Triumphant, for the benefit issuing from our Saviour's Death and Passion.

As also Affections of Sorrow and Compassion;

If you would have your Heart affected with Sorrow and Compassion towards your suffering Saviour, think further upon the deep and afflicting Anguish, Grief and Sadness of his most Holy Soul, who being fully sensible of the eminent

eminent and infinite Dignity of his Father (whom he loved above all that we can conceive) must needs be grieved above measure to see this benigne and most bountiful Creator of all things so maliciously and frequently offended by his own Creatures, after they had received so many and great Benefits from him. And moreover in what an unconceivable sadness he was to foresee so many Souls that were so dear to him, condemned to Eternal Punishment by their own Fault; and further, to aggravate the Affliction of his Soul, how deep did those Immense Dolours of his dearly beloved Mother pierce his Heart to the bottom? And lastly, being all-knowing he was in a strange Anguish to foresee all the Torments that so many Martyrs and Holy Virgins should endure for his sake.

While you are thus Meditating, you may often reflect upon your own Sins and Defects as the cause and occasion of all these

And Acts of
Contrition
for your
Sins;

his Afflictions, and from thence conceive Acts of true Sorrow and Contrition at your base Ingratitude to humble you before his Divine Majesty. And be assured that that is the most pleasing and acceptable Compassion, when you persecute your disordered Passions and Affections, and strive to ruin and root those Enemies out of your Heart, which were the cause of your dear Saviour's Cruel Passion. And to move you to a perfect hatred of Sin, think seriously that all these his Sufferings were to stir you up to detest all Sin, and to fight the more Courageously against your Corrupt Passions and Affections, and them especially that are most predominant in you, and the most offensive to your Saviour.

With a perfect Hatred of them :

And to admire God's Goodness.

Lastly, that by these Meditations upon Christ's Death and Passion, you may be moved to the admiration of his Goodness: Consider he that suffered these things, is the Word Incarnate, God himself, who was made Man for

for us, that those for whom he Suffered are Vile and Miserable Creatures, who have always offended him. That those who inflicted these Cruelties upon him, were the most infamous and very Refuse of the People; that the Afflictions he suffered were Disgraces, Contempts, Derisions, Torments and Wounds so great and so cruel as cannot be expressed or imagined.

To excite you to the greater Admiration, consider after what Manner and with what Courage he suffered all this; with what Patience, Meekness and Willingness of Mind, he behaved himself among so many Torments and Ignominies, who while the Hearts of his Persecutors were so full of Rage and Cruelty against him, retained still for them a Heart full of Sweetness and pure Love, Praying for them, while he was dying by their Hands.

A further Declaration of the Profit that may be drawn from the Meditation upon Christ's Passion.

Explication.
The first
Profit, is a
Confusion
at the sight
of our Im-
perfections.

Among the many Advantages that may be drawn from this holy Exercise, one is, That you must needs conceive not only a Sorrow for your Sins past, but feel also a Shame and Confusion in your Soul, to see those unruly Passions which Crucified our Saviour, still alive and deep rooted in your Heart.

A desire of
and demand
of Pardon,

With reso-
lution of
Amend-
ment.

Another great Profit which proceeds from the former, is, That being truly sensible of your Sins, and ashamed of your Ingratitude, you will heartily desire and humbly beg Pardon for what is past, and Grace to amend for the future; and as an acknowledgment of your extraordinary Obligation for what our Saviour has done for your sake, you will resolve to serve him and love him, and suffer for him hereafter.

The third Profit is, That you will fall out with your perverse Inclinations and Passions, and persecute them to death, tho' they be never so little.

A Persecution of your Passions.

The fourth is, You will force your self to the utmost of your Power, to imitate the Virtues of your dear Saviour, who endured this not only to save you and satisfie for your Sins, but also to give you an Example to follow his Steps.

An Imitation of Christ's Virtues.

Another way of Meditating on the Passion.

There is another Method of Meditating on Christ's Passion, which you may make use of as it suits your Devotion and Occasion; if you desire, for Example, to obtain Patience in imitation of your Redeemer, consider these Points following:

By considering,

I. How the afflicted Soul of your Saviour upon the Cross, behaves it self towards his Heavenly Father.

K 4

II. What

II. What the Father doth towards the Soul of his Son.

III. What the Soul doth towards it self, and its sacred Body.

IV. What your Saviour doth towards you.

V. What you should do towards your Saviour.

1. How
Christ's
Soul carried
it self to-
ward his Fa-
ther.

First, Consider how the Soul of Jesus Christ being intirely fixed upon God, is amazed to behold this infinite and incomprehensible Majesty, (in respect whereof all things created are meerly Nothing), submitting, (tho' immutable in his Glory), to the suffering of such ungrateful Usages upon Earth for Man, who has behaved himself towards him after such a Rebellious and Injurious manner; and how it adores, thanks and offers up it self entirely to the disposition of the divine Will.

2. How the
Father to-
wards him.

Secondly, Consider how God himself willeth and exciteth the Soul of our Saviour to suffer for your sake, all those Blows, Scourges,

ges, Revilings, and Death upon the Cross, assuring him how acceptable it was to him, to see his Patience tried and triumphing among so many sorts of Affronts and Afflictions.

Thirdly, Passing on to the Soul of Christ, consider how he with his Understanding (which is all Light) knowing how highly his Passion pleased God, and with his Will (which is all enflamed) loving the divine Majesty beyond Measure, which thus invited him to suffer for you; he disposes himself joyfully, readily and contentedly, to obey his Will and Pleasure: And who can dive into the Depths of those Desires, that this pure and loving Soul of our Saviour had to suffer for your sake? It found it self in a Labyrinth of Troubles, yet was casting about to encounter new ways of Suffering; and therefore freely gave up it self and its innocent Body as a Prey to the Pleasure and Cruelty of the basest and worst of Villains.

3. How the Soul toward it self and its sacred Body.

K 5

Fourthly,

4. How
your Sa-
viour carries
himself to-
wards you.

Fourthly, Consider your sweet Saviour in the midst of his bitter Torments, fixing his Eyes full of Tears and Tenderness upon you, and imagine him thus Expostulating with you, *Behold my Child, whither your unmortified Affections and unruly Desires have brought me, because you would not use a little Violence to your self to resist them; see how much and how willingly I suffer for your sake, and to give you a perfect Example of Patience: I conjure you therefore, by all these my Sufferings and Sorrows, that you will willingly and contentedly carry this or any other Cross that I shall think fit to lay upon you, that you would resign your self up to bear courageously the Persecutions that befall you in Body or Fame, how hard or contemptible so ever they be; O, could you but conceive the Comfort I should receive in your Patience! You may read it in these my Wounds, wherein my Love is written in bloody Characters: And if I, your Lord and Saviour, am reduced to this Extremity for your Love, Why will you*

*you not consent to endure a little to
satisfie my Heart's desire?*

Fifthly, Consider who it is that thus speaks to you; 'tis the King of Glory, Jesus Christ, true God and true Man; observe the greatness of his Grief, the variety of his Torments and the indignity of his Disgraces, bad enough for the most infamous Malefactor, yet you see him amidst all these, not only Immoveable, Meek and Patient, but even Joyfully contented with them; and as a little Water rather strengthens than extinguishes a well kindled Fire; so by the encrease of his Torments (which his excessive Love thought but little) his Content and Desire of suffering was more and more enkindled and augmented. And all this he endured by no external Violence, or for any self-Interest, but (as he has told you) for your Love, and that you might imitate him and exercise your self in the Virtue of Patience: And then penetrating into what he desires you should

5. How
you should
carry your
self towards
your Sa-
viour.

should do, and the Content you would give him by the practice of Patience, produce Acts of a passionate Will to bear not only this Cross patiently and joyfully, but any greater, that so you may imitate him more perfectly, and give him the more abundant Joy and Satisfaction.

And by imprinting thus in your Mind a Lively Image of his Sufferings and Constancy therein, you will be ashamed to think your Patience so much as a shadow of his, and your Affections scarce any at all, compared with his.

The Crucified Jesus,
the best
Book to
read in.

The Crucified Jesus (my beloved) is the best Book you can read in, and the liveliest Image of Perfection you can draw from; for being the Book of Life, it not only informs your Understanding by Words, but also enflames your Will by Example. The World is full of Books, but none does so speedily and perfectly teach the true Means of all Virtues, as the Contemplation of your suffering Saviour. But they

they who imploy their Time in deploring his Passion and admiring his Patience, and apply it not to their particular Practice when occasions are offered ; do like those Souldiers, who before the Battle, talk of great Matters and speak high Words in their Tents, but upon the first sight of their Enemies in a Fight, quit their Colours, throw down their Arms and forsake the Field : And indeed, what can be more cowardly and unworthy, than to contemplate the Virtues of our Lord and Saviour, and to love and admire them ; and presently to forget them and refuse to practise them when occasion is offered to exercise our selves in their Imitation ?

C H A P.

C H A P. XXVI.

Of sensible Devotion and of Dryness.

YOU are to be very careful upon the feeling of any sensible Devotion to turn it to a right use; for our Enemy will be seeking afterward to puff us up with Pride, and to make us forget our Duty and the Amendment of our Lives: So that we have reason always to fear our selves in what may be the consequence of this Devotion, especially if there be a great deal of Gust and Sweetness in it.

How to
make the
best use of
sensible De-
votion.

Therefore when you find your Devotion raised with spiritual Delights, tho' they may be the effects of God's Grace, yet never suffer your Mind to rest upon them, nor forget your own Misery and Nothing; but think of driving

driving out of your Heart, with more Care and more Hatred of your self than ever, all inordinate Affections that you may have to any thing whatever; learn to seek nothing but God alone, and how to please him; for by this Means, these sensible Delights will have their proper Effects.

Dryness, Dulness or Barrenness in Devotion, may proceed from three Causes: It may come from the Devil, to discourage us and make us quit our spiritual Enterprize, that we may again return to the Diversions and Entertainments of the World: It may also come from our selves, by our own Fault and Negligence: It may come from Grace, either to excite us to more Diligence, and to abstract us from all other Cares and Concerns, but those which regard God and his Honour, or our Perfection, by a perfect disengagement from all things, even spiritual Pleasures; lest the Affection we might have for

Three Causes of spiritual Dryness.

Therefore
you are to
search out
the true
Cause.

for them, should divide our Hearts, which God would have wholly his: When therefore you are troubled with Dryness and Dulness, enter into your self and examine whether it be not through your own Faults, that you have brought this upon your self; if so, humble your self and strive against it, but not with an eager desire to recover the sensible sweetness of Grace, but to separate from you all that may bee displeasing to God.

And keep on
your ac-
customed
Exercises.

And let it be your continual Care not to neglect any of your spiritual Exercises, notwithstanding such disgusts, but prosecute them with your utmost Diligence, how fruitless soever they appear, and drink this bitter Potion with Courage and Resolution; and if it be mingled sometimes with such thick Darkness and Troubles in the Mind, that you cannot tell how to swallow it, nor which way to turn your self, yet persevere with Patience and Quietness,

ness, sitting solitary under this Cross, not seeking to divert it by any Earthly Pleasures, tho' the World or any Creature should present themselves to you; and you may do well to conceal your Cross from every Body, except some one particular Friend, who has experienced the same, that you may know from him how to behave your self in this Condition, conformable to the Will of God.

And seek no outward Comforts.

And the chief end you should propose in making use of the Communion, Prayer or other Spiritual Exercises, at such times, ought to be rather to obtain strength to support your Pain, than to mitigate it: And if your Mind is so troubled or distracted, that you find great difficulty to Meditate or Pray, keep only a willing Mind, and supply it with Ejaculatory Prayers, and frequent Elevations of the Mind to God, making use of these or such like Sentences.

Nor pray to have it mitigated.

My

Pfal. 38.

My Heart panteih, my Strength hath failed me, and the light of mine Eyes is gone from me.

Pfal. 13.

1. 2.

How long wilt thou forget me O Lord, for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy Face from me? How long shall I seek Counsel in my Soul, and be so vexed in my Heart?

Pfal. 22.

My God, my God, look upon me, why hast thou forsaken me, and art so far from my Health, and from the Words of my Complaint?

Or you may say, O my Lord, O my Love, why dost thou leave thy poor Servant thus all alone, who has no Comfort in himself, and desires none from any Creature? what shall he do if he find it not in thee? whether wilt thou go poor strayed Sheep, if thou hearest not the voice of thy Divine Shepherd? O living Fountain, shall I never more become worthy to taste one drop of thy sweetness! O my God, and only refuge, to whom shall I have Recourse if thou leavest me? how is it possible for my dry Soul to subsist in this Desert, without the refreshment of thy Heavenly Dew?

When

When you find your self thus desolate and abandoned, remember how your dear Saviour was also left Comfortless by his Heavenly Father, in the Garden, on the Cross, and in his greatest Afflictions; therefore joyn with him often in those Words, *Not my will, but thy will be done*; which proceeding from the depth of your Heart, will sweetly wound the Heart of God, and move him to Compassionate your Misery, either by sending you Comfort or giving you Courage, Constancy and Resignation to bear it.

And be assured of this, that suffering this Dryness or any Affliction with Patience and humble Resignation, is a very acceptable Prayer to God, and makes you truly Devout; because true Devotion is a readiness of Will to follow Christ with the Cross upon our Shoulders; and it is by this way that he calls and invites us to come to him to seek God for himself. If therefore Spiritual
Persons

In this Affliction remember how your Saviour was left comfortless in the Garden, &c.

For, to suffer for God, is the best Prayer, and makes you truly devout.

And not sensible Devotion.

Persons especially Women) would seriously examine their Progress in the way of Perfection and Piety by this Rule, and not by the feeling of sensible Devotion (which many chiefly regard) they would make better use of such Comforts in their Exercises of Devotion, which are sent them from God, to make them more zealous in resigning themselves to his Holy Will, which disposes all things to our good and eternal Salvation.

The Error of many.

There is also a great Error and Mischief into which these Persons are ordinarily apt to fall, especially those that are weak; when they are tormented with unclean, blasphemous or perverse Thoughts, they presently become fearful and lose Courage, as if God had quite forsaken them, and they cannot tell how to persuade themselves that his Holy Spirit should inhabit a Heart full of such wicked Thoughts; and they so entangle themselves in these troublesome

blesome Fancies, till by degrees they fall into a strange faint-heartedness, and from thence into Despair; so that often to get rid of it and recover their Quiet, they leave off their good Exercises, and turn to their former Course of Life; wherein they shew themselves little grateful to God, who would not have permitted them to be troubled and tempted after that manner, but to give them a more perfect Knowledge of themselves, what wretched, frail and desolate Creatures they are, and that they might the more seriously seek and draw near to him.

That which you ought to do in such distresses, is to procure to your self by them a greater confusion at the sight of your Baseness, and let your Thoughts dwell upon the consideration of your miserable Corruption; because God by this means would have you know it, and be convinced that you by Nature have such a violent incli-

What you
are to do in
this Distress.

inclination to all manner of Evil, that without the Divine Assistance you would be every moment in danger of falling into Ruin.

After this, seeing that God by the danger he shews you that you are in, would have you approach nearer to him, in obliging you of necessity to have recourse to him in Prayer; raise up your Heart with a firm Hope and Confidence in him, and give him Thanks for the favour of such Troubles and Temptations, and take this for a Certainty, that such sort of Thoughts are easier driven away by a quiet and prudent bearing of them, than by resisting them with Earnestness and Inquietude.

CHAP. XXVII.

How the Blessed Sacrament is a very powerful Means of conquering our Passions.

THE Holy Sacrament is received for many ends ; But if you design to receive it particularly to assist you in destroying your vicious Inclinations, you may do it after this manner.

The Day before the Communion, if you have opportunity you may begin in the Evening to consider the desire that Jesus Christ has to unite himself to you, by the means of this Sacrament, and to help you to subdue your unmortified Passions. This Desire is so great that no created Understanding can comprehend it : But that you may conceive a little of it, consider these Two things.

Meditate the Day before, upon your Saviour's desire to unite himself to you.

First,

First, How much this great Majesty takes pleasure to be with us, and dwell in us, since the Holy Scripture assures us that his delight is to be with the Children of Men, and in requital of this Love, he only requires our Hearts, saying, *My Son give me thy Heart.*

And how he
hates Sin.

Secondly, How much he hates Sin, which hinders his nearer Union with us, and is directly opposite to his infinite Perfections; for being the supream Being, the pure Light, and perfect Beauty, it is impossible but he must have an unconceivable Hatred, and abomination for Sin, which is meer Darkness, Imperfection, and the Corruption of our Souls.

And to imprint this earnest desire of your Saviour the deeper upon your Heart, Meditate often upon what is recorded in the Old and New Testament, especially about his Passion and Cruel Death, all which he suffered to deliver us from the miserable slavery of Sin, and to destroy the power of such Affections

Affections and Self-love as are contrary to his Divine Will.

These Considerations having made you sensible of the desire that Jesus Christ has to enter into your Soul; excite in your self an ardent Affection to receive and entertain him, by these or such Ejaculatory Prayers: *Come, O my sweet Saviour, and help thy miserable Creature to conquer her Enemies; when will that happy moment come, that I shall receive thee O my God, the Bread of Life, that being fortified by it, I may overcome all my disordered Passions and Affections?*

And moves your Soul to a reciprocal desire towards him.

And when you perceive your self strengthened by the Hope of your Saviour's coming into your Soul, then provoke your Passions to Battle, especially that which is your greatest Enemy; fight with them, check 'em and repress 'em with many repeated Acts of Hatred against them, and of enflamed Affections for the Virtue which is opposite to them; this may be your Evenings Imployment, and

L the

And then provoke your Passions to Battle.

the Morning Exercise as soon as you are awake.

Being near
the time of
Communi-
on, you are
to fear:

But withal
to have Cou-
rage and
Confidence.

But when the time of receiving the Holy Sacrament is near, a little before you Communicate, make a short and serious review of the Faults and Unfaithfulness you have committed against your Saviour, since your last approach to that Holy Table, and being filled with Shame at your self, and seized with a Holy Fear, be confounded at your ingratitude and unworthiness to receive it: But considering at the same time his goodness and readiness to Pardon, and inclination to shew Mercy, and encouraging your self with a Pious Confidence, that he would have you receive him notwithstanding your unworthiness, go on with cheerfulness to this Heavenly Banquet, and joyfully embrace your Saviour in your Soul.

After Com-
munion, dis-
cover your
Wants,

After Communion, retire as soon as possible into the secret of your Heart, and then discover to your Divine Physician all your Defects

fects and Deformities, saying in your Mind, *Thou seest, O my Saviour, how ready I am to offend thee, and how many miserable Defects I have ; that this Passion does so violently oppose me, that it is impossible for me ever to deliver my self from it : Thou, O my God, alone must fight my Battles for me, and it is from thee alone that I must hope for the Victory.*

After you have thus silently prayed, turn your self to the Eternal Father, and present before him his dear Son's Passion, to the same end that you received him for ; and expect with constant Hope his Divine help, which tho' you do not presently perceive, yet you shall infallibly receive it, when it is most expedient for you.

And constantly hope for the Divine Help.

CHAP. XXVIII.

How we may by the Holy Communion excite in us fervent Affections.

Consider the
infinite Love
and Good-
ness of God;

TO excite in you by means of this Holy Sacrament, such a fervent Love of God, as may destroy and consume all self-will and self-love; you must represent to your self the immense Love that God has for you; considering the Evening before that the Almighty and Supream Lord, was not content to have Created you after his own Image and Likeness, nor to have sent his only Son into the World, to serve you there Three and Thirty Years, in continual Labours and Sufferings; and lastly, to undergo a most Cruel Death on the Cross for

for your Redemptions ; but he would also leave you the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, for the Food and Refreshment of your Soul, and your Succour and Support in all your Straits and Necessities. But that you may be inflamed all over with the fire of this Love, by a due Consideration of so precious a Gift, you may first consider who it is that bestows this upon you ; it is no less than God himself, the Divine and Increated Power, Wisdom and Goodness, which has no Bounds, whose Excellency and Perfection infinitely exceeds the reach of all created Capacities. Secondly, look upon the Gift as it is in itself, which is the true and only Son of the Eternal Father, to whom he is equal in Majesty and Greatness, being of the same substance, and of the same Nature.

Especially
shew'd in the
Holy Sacra-
ment; weigh-
ing first who
it is that
comes to
you.

Secondly,
What he
gives you.

Now if we esteem so highly of a small Temporal Gift of little value, when it comes from an Earthly Prince, and if we so care-
L 3 fully

fully preserve it for his sake that gave it ; what account should we make of a Gift, that is not only Supernatural, but also more than Heavenly, and of an incomprehensible Excellence ? And how much is it to be valued as it is the Son of God, and given us by God himself, as a Token of his Love, and tender Affection towards us ?

Thirdly,
The Eternity
of this Love.

After this, raise your Thoughts further to reflect upon the Eternity of this Divine Love, and that before all Time, God who is an Infinite Good, proposed to give himself to you for your Food and Nourishment : And thus touched and moved with inward Joy, say in your self, *Is it so then O infinite Goodness of my God, That thou didst love me in that Abyss of Eternity ? And that thou dost so much value thy poor and unworthy Creature ? That thou remembredst me in thy Blessed Eternity, and that my God then had an ardent desire to give himself to me for the Food of my Soul ?*

Consider

Consider lastly, the Purity of the Love, that so great a Lord shews to so mean a Worm ! How different it is from that of Men ! How free from the least mixture of Profit or Self-Interest ! How far it is above your Merits, and that it is a pure Work of his Mercy and Goodness ! In the sweetness of this Meditation, and in Love and Admiration of the Divine Bounty, your Heart may break out into these Raptures :

Whence is it O my Lord and Saviour that thou lovest me so much, that am such a vile and unworthy Creature ?

Hence break forth into Admiration;

Why art thou so desirous O King of Glory, to join thy self to me who am but Dust and Ashes ? I conceive the design, O my dear Lord, of this thy excessive Love towards me : It is to win me reciprocally to thy Love. O the Purity of Divine Love ! Thou lovedst me O my God, and givest thy whole self to me for no other end but that I may in gratitude give thee my Love, my Life, my All intirely ; not that thou hast any need of me, but meerly for thy Mercy sake, and

for my eternal Profit and Advancement; that by this sweet Tye and happy Union of Love, my earthly Heart may be raised up to become one with thee, O my Lord and my God.

And Ravishment to see your self so highly valued;

And make an intire Oblation of your self:

And this being the chief Act of Religion,

Here all ravish'd with Joy to see your self so highly valued and beloved of God, withdraw and retire into the secretest part of your Heart, and there considering that all this Love was to draw and entice such a poor and inconsiderable Creature as your self, to his divine Majesty; make such an absolute Oblation of your self to him, that your Memory may scarce think of any thing but God, your Affection may abhor all content which may come from any thing but him, and your Understanding may admit of no other Object for its Entertainment than him, who is the only true satisfaction of all your inward Faculties and outward Senses.

And since there is no Act of Religion in the Service of God, that is equal or comparable to this

this (of receiving the blessed Sacrament) either to reconcile him to us, or unite us to his love; force your self to the utmost of your power to prepare, purify, open and resign your Heart to him, and to shut it against all earthly Things.

Strive to perform it most perfectly.

Then offer and dedicate your self to God, with as much Heartiness and Affection as possibly you can, endeavouring to preserve always in your Heart, an ardent desire of following his holy Will. And when you perceive this Desire and Affection well enkindled in you, you may know by the Light of your Understanding, that God desires with all the ardency of his Love, you should the day following open your Heart to him, that he may enter in and make his abode there, to feast with you and to take his full delight in you: You therefore ought to shew your mutual desire to receive him with these kind of ejaculatory Prayers, *O Heavenly Manna! O Divine Manna! When*

Dedicating your self wholly to him,

And freely open your Heart to him;

L 5

shall

shall I receive thee ! When shall I receive thee into my Soul, according to thy own desire ! When shall I be united to thee by a true Love and sincere Affection ! When shall it be (O thou Life of my Soul) that I shall be delivered from my Imperfections and Self-will for thy Love !

But take
heed of Va-
nity and
Curiosity.

In such and the like Prayers and Meditations, you may spend the Evening and Morning, to excite, encrease and enflame your desire to receive your dear Saviour, to please him and be most happily united to him. Take care above all, to be well recollected in your self, so that all the Powers and Faculties of your Soul may be disengaged and free from all curiosity of vain and idle Thoughts or worldly Affairs: Let the same Watch be upon your Senses, lest your Heart steal out by them, to take some Pleasure in outward Objects, and so you lose all the Benefit of your Devotion and Recollection.

The

The time of communicating drawing nigh, think you are going to receive him who is the Lord of all the Universe, and who has made you after his own likeness, the Son of God, who died for you upon the Cross, that infinite Goodness, who has so often rescued you from danger of death and eternal Damnation, which your Sins have deserved.

At the time near the Communion, think what you are going to do.

Thank him therefore with most profound Humility, and (uniting your Spirit and all the Forces and Powers of Body and Soul together) adore him as true God and true Man: Implore also his Pardon for all your Faults and Ingratitude; and that the same Love which moves him to bestow so noble a Gift upon you, may also induce him to purge out all your stains of Sin and Uncleaness, to dispose you thereby to a more pure and perfect Union with his divine Majesty.

Thank, Adore, Implore.

When the Priest has made an end of that Prayer, *We do not* pre-

When the Priest says, We do not presume, &c.

presume to come to this thy Table, &c. We are not worthy; follow him with these or the like Expressions, speaking them from the bottom of your Soul; I am not worthy to receive thee, O my Lord, before whose Majesty the Angels in Heaven tremble and veil their Faces. I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my Roof, who am one of the meanest, weakest and ungratefulest Creatures upon Earth. I am not worthy, O my Lord, that thou shouldst enter into my Heart, because I love thee and remember thee so little; tho' these were the principal Reasons of thy instituting this blessed Sacrament.

Humble and
abase your
self, and
then raise up
your Heart
with Hope.

Thus humble and abase your self at the consideration of your Sin and Misery, and then raising your Heart with a firm Confidence in God, say, But do thou only speak the Word, O my Lord, and thy Servant shall be healed. Enter, O my Love, into my unworthy Breast, and make use of thy infinite Power and Goodness in Pardoning my Sins, supplying my Defects,

fects, and protecting me from my Enemies.

After you have received, retire your self as soon as you can into the most interior part of your Soul, and there entertaining your self with your beloved Guest, use these or the like respectful Expressions; *What hath moved thee, O great King of Kings, to enter into me, who am so miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked? He will answer thee, 'Tis Love; for thou art my Dove, my Friend, my Sister, my Spouse and my dearly Beloved: Then reply to him, O uncreated Love, O sweet Love! What dost thou demand of me? What wouldst thou have me to do? What is it that thou dost desire of me? I ask nothing (says he) but Love: I would have nothing burn in thy Heart but the Fire of my Love, and that it should devour all other Love within thee, and destroy all self-Will and self-Seeking. This, this is my desire, because I would be truly thine, and would have thee likewise to be wholly mine, which*

Having received, entertain your Guest with the most respectful Carriage, and Expressions of Love.

can

can never be, till thou freely deliverest up thy self up to my Will and Pleasure; for without this entire Resignation, thy Mind will be always taken up with some vain Complacency and Love of thy self and thy own Actions. I desire therefore, that thou shouldst hate thy self, that I may make thee partaker of my Love: I would have thy Heart to my self, that it may be wholly joyned and united to me; for to this end was my Heart opened to thee upon the Cross: My will is, I say, That thou desire nothing, think of nothing, and see nothing but my self only; that I alone may be in thee, that thou being swallowed up in the infinite abyss of my Love, may be totally transformed and changed into it: And that thou mayest be perfectly happy in me, and I entirely contented in thee.

Lastly, In memory and virtue of that divine Sacrifice, which was offered upon the Cross, offer up your self, and all the Prayers and Sacrifices that are that day offered in the universal Church.

C H A P.

C H A P. XXIX.

Of Spiritual Communion.

ALthough, my beloved, we can receive our Saviour Sacramentally but seldom; yet, we may receive him Spiritually every Hour and every Moment; for nothing can hinder you from this, but your own Negligence, or some Fault purely of your own Will.

You may
thus often
Communi-
cate,

And this Spiritual Communion, may be sometimes more acceptable to God and profitable to your Soul, than the Sacramental, where there was a Defect in a due Preparation and Disposition for it; for as often as you desire to receive Christ Spiritually into your Soul, you will find him always ready and disposed to give himself to you for your spiritual Nourishment, and you may prepare your self for it, after this manner:

By frequent
Desires;

Raising

Raising your Heart to God with that Intention, reflect first a little upon your own Frailty and frequent Failings, till you feel your self touched with Sorrow for having offended him; then turning to him with an enflamed Affection and firm Confidence in his Goodness, beseech him that he will be pleased to come and Visit your poor Soul, and Strengthen it with his holy Spirit.

And it is an
excellent ex-
ercise against
Passions.

So also when you have a design to do Violence to your self in something, either to mortify some one of your Passions or Appetites, or to plant some Virtue in your Soul, make use of this spiritual Communion to that end; and addressing your self towards your amiable Saviour, beseech him with a fervent desire, to come and take Possession of the interiour of your Soul; or calling to mind your last Sacramental Communion, speak to him with a Heart enflamed with a desire of receiving him; *When will*
the

the time be, O my dear Saviour, that I shall receive thee again at the Altar! Come now, O my God, at this time into my Soul, and Communicate the same Grace and Virtue to me Spiritually, as thou usest to do to those that receive thy precious Body: Or thus, O my Lord and my Love, I am not worthy to receive thee Sacramentally; but do thou, O increased Goodness and unlimited Power, pardon all my Imperfections, and make me worthy to receive thee Spiritually, to the Honour of thy holy Name, and the true Comfort of my Soul. And after that, continue silent and recollected within your self, imagining that you have received him, and entertain him as you are taught in the foregoing Chapter.

C H A P. XXX.

Of Thanksgiving.

AS all the good we do comes from God, and 'tis he alone that does it in us; we are obliged

All Goodness is from God,

To whom
therefore all
Gratitude
must be
shewed.

obliged to give Thanks to him alone for all our good Exercises; for all the Victories we get over our Enemies, and all the Graces, whether general or particular, that we receive from him. To behave your self therefore under them as you ought, consider the end for which your amiable Saviour communicates these Favours to you; because on this consideration depends the true offering of our Praise and Thanksgiving.

First then
acknowledge
his Good-
ness,

And then
your own
Unworthi-
ness.

Now as in all the Graces he bestows on us, he proposes his own Glory and our Profit: The first thing you ought to do, is to acknowledge his Power, Wisdom and Goodness, which so evidently appear in the Graces which you have received. After this, consider that not only you have nothing in your self that can deserve these Favours; but on the contrary, you are full of Imperfections and Ingratitude. In short, be Obedient to his divine Will, doing what he demands of you by the Grace he gives you; for he
does

does not grant it you, but that you may learn by it to love and serve him better : Therefore to your Praise and Thanks you ought to joyn a perfect Oblation of your self, in the manner following.

C H A P. XXXI.

Of the Offering up of our Selves.

AFTER Thanksgiving for Favours received, the Soul presently breaks forth into that pathetical Expression of the Royal Psalmist, *What shall I render unto the Lord for all the Benefits that he hath done unto me ?* And therefore that you may do something by way of return, and seeming like satisfaction, you are to offer up to his Majesty all that you are, have or can do ; and that this Oblation may be an entire, absolute, voluntary, and efficacious Act of your inward Man.

Consider first, with a serious attention, the Greatness and Glory of God (which will very much help

First, Consider God's Greatness and Glory.

help you in the intire Oblation of your self) and you will find that there is a Fear and Reverence due to his Greatness and Majesty ; that there is a Love due to his Goodness ; that there is a Hope and Confidence due to his Mercy ; and so of his other Attributes and Perfections ; and you will congratulate and rejoice to think that God is what he is, to wit, the Best, Greatest, most Wise, most Holy, most Happy, most Powerful, most Infinite, and that he has all the Perfections that he possesses ; by these Considerations, variously multiplying several amorous Acts of Complacence in your Heart.

Secondly,
Adore and
acknowledge
him, &c.

Then bow down your Body and humble your Soul with most profound Reverence before your Lord and Maker ; adoring his Divine Majesty, and acknowledging him to be the supream Governor of all his Creatures ; and particularly that whatsoever good you have by Nature or by Grace is all his own Gift ; since he alone bestowed it upon you, and he alone pre-

preserves it in you ; for thus you must needs confess your self to be his Debtor, though your Offering were never so great ; because you can present him with nothing which is not already his own, and first proceeded from his Goodness and Liberality ; nor does he lose his Title and Dominion by conferring it upon you.

In the next place, pass on to the Oblation it self, and deliver up all your Interest in whatever you have or may have, into the Hands of your Creator, with all possible Cheerfulness and Integrity ; that is, offer up to him all that he has given you, and so commit and resign your whole self, both Soul and Body, to God in perpetual Subjection, to dispose of you both in Time and Eternity, as he best pleases. Neither let it suffice you to make this Oblation generally, by presenting to him the root and beginning of all your Thoughts, Words and Actions ; but you should do it in a particular manner, by presenting even

Thirdly,
Offer up all
your Interest
in any thing,

even those also, which by reason of your State and Calling you are obliged to Exercise, to the Honour and Glory of his Name.

And unite all
to the Me-
rits of Jesus
Christ.

Lastly, unite this entire Oblation of your self, and all that belongs to you, with the Merits of Jesus Christ, the sweet Spouse of your Soul, that from thence it may have that Value and Esteem, which from it self you cannot hope or expect; and thus you may end your Exercise, by presenting the Eternal Father of Mercies, with your whole self, and the Holy Merits of his Son from the Manger to the Cross; for all these are your Treasures, which he at his Death, bequeathed by his last Will and Testament to you, whom he left Entitled to all his Merits: But remember that you make this Oblation not only for your self, but also for the Universal Church, and all her Members which will make it much more acceptable to God, being perfumed with the Incense of Charity.

How to of-
fer up

If further, you desire to make
an

an Oblation of Christ's Actions for your Offences, behave your self in this manner; First, reflect upon your Sins, and perceiving that you cannot hope to pacifie the Anger of God, nor satisfie the Divine Justice by your own endeavours; address your self to your Saviour's Life, Passion and Death, and fix upon some one or other Action or Suffering of his, as upon his Fasting, or his Praying, or the shedding of his Precious Blood; then consider that, this he did, and suffered for your Sins, and to reconcile you to his Father, as if he had said, *I do now, O my Heavenly Father, fully satisfie thy Divine Justice for the Sins of this thy Servant N. O, let it please thee to spare him and receive him into the Number of thine Elect.*

Chr ist's Acti-
ons for our
Offences.

Do you also make the same Oblation of your dear Saviour to his Eternal Father, and humbly beg for your self and others, that in Vertue of this Offering, and for his own Glory's sake, he will in Mercy pardon both your own and
their

their Offences. And this Exercise you may very profitably make use of in any Action or Passage of our Saviour's Life and Passion.

Another way of Offering up our selves.

That you may be able to make an acceptable Oblation of your self to God, consider that his well beloved Son all the time he

Christ here
on Earth,
offered not
only him-
self,

But also all
Mankind to
his Father,

Make you
the same
Oblation,

was upon the Earth, made a continual Sacrifice to his eternal Father, not only of himself and of all his Actions, but also of all Mankind together with himself; in consequence of this Reflection, consider that our Lord Jesus Christ does still present and offer up himself to his Father, after the same manner that he did heretofore when he was in the World. And so joyning your self with him, make your Oblation in Virtue and Union of his, or rather, make again that same Offering of Jesus Christ, wherein he comprehended you; and let it be made with as little mixture of self-Interest or self-Love as you can, only regarding the Will and Providence of God,
to

to which you ought to submit, and Sacrifice your self entirely without reserve. After that, endeavour to blot all Creatures out of your memory, and making God then the whole Object of your View, offer up your self to him after this manner. *Behold my Creator and my God, a little Dust and Ashes in the Hands of thy Eternal Providence. Do with me, O my God, whatsoever thou pleasest, in Life or Death, in Time or in Eternity.*

When you would offer to God any of your Actions, as your Fasts or Prayers, or any other Good Works; consider first, that the Son of God offers still every Day to his Father our Good Works with his, and in that Union that yours have with those of Jesus Christ, present them to the Eternal Father by the same Offering, that his Son has made him of them: And you may know, whether this Oblation proceeds from a sincere and disinterested Heart, if you can practise it in times of Adversity, and Distresses of your Soul, and if you

As also in
any of your
Good
Works.

M sup-

support your Afflictions with Courage, and an entire Resignation to the Divine Will.

CHAP. XXXII.

How to Pray for Divine Grace.

HAVING made this Oblation of this most precious Sacrifice (which is no less than Christ himself with all his Glorious Merits) to his Eternal Father ; you may then appear with Confidence before the Throne of Mercy, to Petition for a supply of your Necessities, and that you may do in the best and most efficacious manner.

First, Encourage your self with Confidence in his Goodness.

First, Encourage your self with Confidence in God, at the remembrance of his Benefits, Goodness and Liberality towards you ; for nothing can more strengthen your hope of obtaining new Supplies, than reflecting upon his former Favours in times of Necessity, and know that this Confidence gives the greatest Efficacy to your Petition ; so that without it, we can never expect to obtain of God any thing that we demand.

Se-

Secondly, Let your Confidence be sure to be joined with Humility, Distrusting wholly your self, but relying boldly upon the power of Christ's Merits: Nor would I advise you to become fearful and pusillanimous upon pretence of Humility, so as not to beg large Benefits from God's Goodness; for tho' it is very necessary for you to know your own Baseness, and consider how little you deserve, yet you must never distrust the Divine Bounty, or undervalue his Liberality: No, never be dejected, for tho' you deserve nothing, yet, since the Gifts of God are not grounded upon our Defects, but upon Christ's Merits, which are of Infinite Worth and Dignity, you have great Encouragement to ask much.

Thirdly, Endeavour to press your Petition with fervent Desires, that is, that you frequently and ardently wish to obtain what you ask for: For since you have a Bountiful God and Merciful Father, to lay all your Wants and Necessities before, and who not only bids you

Secondly,
Join Humi-
lity with it.

Thirdly,
Press your
Petition with
fervent De-
sires.

ask great things, but presses you to it by so many Threats and Promises, and tells you for your encouragement that he will certainly hear and answer your Petitions: Why should you not enforce your Request with enflamed Desires?

The want
whereof
hinder the
Effect of our
Prayers.

And indeed, we most commonly fail in the Effects of our Demands, because we want this Fervour in our Desires, and are so tepid and careless when we are at our Devotions, praying rather because Faith and Reason dictate to us that such things are needful for us, than that we zealously desire to receive them: The true cause of which negligence is, that our Affections are so fastned to Earthly things, that we esteem them in our Wills, tho' we slight them with our Understandings; and consequently tho' we know in our Judgment, that our Minds are to be raised to higher Objects, yet we do not seriously endeavour to be dis-engaged from Worldy and Carnal Pleasures; whereas if we vigorously, humbly and heartily desired it, our
Prayers

Prayers would soon have a very happy effect.

Lastly, let Charity for your Neighbour go alway along with your Prayer; for you should not think it enough to pray for your self, but should extend your Piety and Compassion to the Necessities of others.

Fourthly,
Add to them
1st. Charity.

Secondly, Perseverance; for it pleases God many times to prolong and put off the fulfilling our Petitions, for our greater Profit, and to encrease and enkindle our Holy Desires: As is evident by the example of the *Canaanitish* Woman, and the Widow in the Gospel.

Second'y,
Perseve-
rance.

Thirdly, Resignation of your Will; for you are to represent your Desires before God, as if you expected rather the fulfilling of his Divine Pleasure, than of your Petition; so Christ prayed in the Garden, *Not my Will*, said he, *but thine be done.*

Thirdly,
Resignation.

C H A P. XXXIII.

Some Advice concerning Prayer.

First, Read
over-night
the Matter
of your Me-
ditation.

Secondly,
Reflect of
the same in
the Morn-
ing.

Thirdly,
Consider his
Majesty to
whom you
are to Pray.

IN the Evening before you go to Bed, read the Mystery of our Saviour's Life, or that which you design to Meditate upon the next Morning, and contracting all your Meditation to two or three Heads, endeavour to imprint them in your Memory.

When you awake in the Morning, let your first Thoughts be upon that which you would Meditate in your time of Prayer, shutting out all other Thoughts from your Heart, and at the same time call to mind the Points you proposed the Evening before, and remember that 'tis to God you are a going to speak.

Therefore before you are come to the place of Prayer, make a pause for a little while, considering that the same God which the Angels adore in Heaven, is in the place where you are, that he looks upon you, and is present to all your behaviour in your Prayers; let

let this Truth make a deep Impression on your Mind, and thereupon pay him a most profound Reverence both of Body and Heart, as it were to desire permission to speak to his Divine Majesty.

Then kneeling down, begin your Prayer, first offering up to God all the Thoughts Words and Actions of your Life, particularly present to him all that shall pass in your Mind in this time of Prayer, to the end, it may all be to his greatest Honour and Glory; and humbly implore his gracious Assistance, that you may perform it with such attention, Devotion and Reverence, as befits one that is speaking to his Lord and Saviour.

Presently after this, imagine your self present to the Mystery you intend to Meditate on, and in the very place where it happened; for this may be a means to fix your imagination, and keep it from wandering; as if you Meditate upon the Incarnation of our Lord; think you see the glorious Archangel coming in to the Blessed

Fourthly,
Begin your
Prayer.

Fifthly, Ap-
ply your
Mind to the
Mystery;

Virgin *Mary*, and talking with her: If your Subject be our Saviour's being Scourged, imagine you see Jesus Christ tied fast to a Pillar, and his Cruel Executioners whipping and tearing his Body with Rods: Thus you may vary your Fancy, and conform it to the manner of each Mystery.

And beg
what you
intend to
obtain.

And when the Mystery is thus present to your Mind, make your Petition, and beg of God what you proposed to obtain by this Exercise; as if your Meditation be upon Christ's Incarnation; let your Prayer be for Spiritual Light, that you may more clearly know and perceive that ineffable Love that moved him to become Man for you: If it be of his Passion, beg of him Grace to be able to share with, and compassionate him in his Sufferings: Thus you may change your demand conformable to the Mystery.

After this
begin with
the first
Head:

Begin then to Meditate on the first Head, and if you find in that Matter enough for your Mind to work upon, continue on it all the

the time you have allotted for Prayer; but if not, pass on to the second: And briefly take this for a Maxim in all your Meditations, that in whatever you find your Affections enkindled, stay there as long as the Gust or Devotion remains, without troubling your Mind to pass on to any other.

And let not your Understanding roam after high and curious Speculations, but make use of its Reasonings and Discourses only so far as to excite in your Will pious Affections, and solid Resolutions to serve God better; For that is the end we ought to have in Prayer: Therefore with every Consideration, endeavour to raise your Affections, and from every Affection, fix some particular Resolution, or to do that Day something for the honour of God; as to reform such or such a Fault or Imperfection, mortify your Sensuality on this or that occasion: And this is the true fruit and benefit of Prayer.

And let not your Mind roam after high and curious Matters.

And stay the
full time set
apart for
Prayer ;

Be very resolute also in staying out the full time allotted for your Prayer ; and be not discouraged from pursuing it to the end, notwithstanding any dryness or distraction in your Devotion ; and tho' even all the time of Prayer should be spent in resisting and rejecting your Thoughts : For such a Prayer for the most part is more profitable to a Soul that is diligent in resisting, and patient in suffering, and expecting God's Grace, than when it sensibly partakes of the Sweets and Comforts of Devotion.

At the end,
reflect how
you have
behaved
your self.

Your Exercise being ended, stay a little to consider and examine how you have behaved your self in your Prayer : If you find it has been pretty well, and you have done your Duty, give God thanks for it : If on the contrary you have been remiss and negligent, beg Pardon for it, and after having found out the cause of it, make a firm purpose to correct your self in it the next time.

The Days that you Communicate, you may take for the Subject of your Prayer the Exercise for the Communion that follows.

C H A P. XXXIV.

An Exercise for the Communion.

THE first thing you do in order to compose and settle your Mind before the Communion-Service, may be to imagine Jesus Christ present with you, encompassed with Angels and Blessed Spirits adoring him. 1. The place;

Then humbly address your self to him, with great Reverence; and since he has promised to vouchsafe to give himself to you in this Sacrament, beseech him to adorn your Soul with such things as are necessary for your worthy receiving him, you being so poor and incapable of preparing your self for so great a favour. 2. Beg of God to prepare your Heart.

Then reflect who it is that intends to come to you; that it is not an ordinary Person, or one whom 3. Think what Guest is to be in i.

whom you have but little Obligation to. But it is he, whose Greatness and Glory is represented to us in the Holy Scriptures, he who is worthily called a Saviour, from the Salvation he has merited and procured for us; he in short, that has taken our Interest in hand with so much Charity, that he came in Person to be our Mediator; that he has employed for our Reconciliation, not only his Authority and Power, but did even Sacrifice all his Interest, Satisfaction, Honour and his own Life upon an Ignominious Cross. And be assured and perswaded of this, that this Sacrament was an Institution of Jesus Christ himself, since he has said, *Do this as oft as you do it, in remembrance of me.*

4. To whom
he comes.

The fourth thing you are to consider, is to whom this Amiable Saviour is coming; to a vile Worm of the Earth, a Vessel full of Filth and Corruption, that was a Child of Wrath, and of the Devil; and who has so often despised all the Graces and Commands of God,

God, and does still abuse his Mercies, and takes so little care of serving him.

The fifth Consideration you are to dwell upon, is, that he is a coming to unite himself to the Soul that receives him, in order that she should live thenceforward a divine Life, which it will not be difficult to convince your self of; for as the Humours of our Body are ordinarily such as the Nourishment we give it, so our Soul receiving this divine Food, will consequently live a divine Life; according to what the Son of God says, *As I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.*

5. Why he comes to you.

Sixthly and lastly, Pray the holy Spirit, that since for the Sake and Merits of Jesus Christ, and not of your Deserts, he vouchsafes to come under your Roof, that he will be pleased to prevent you with his Grace, and enrich you with his Gifts, that you may be made a holy Temple and Abode fit to receive your Saviour into, as he formerly prepared the Womb of the blessed Virgin *Mary*. Chap.

6. Make your Petition.

C H A P. XXXV.

An Exercise after the Communion.

1. Think
him within
you.

YOUR Exercise after the Communion, may be to consider Jesus Christ as being within you, and silently and quietly to observe his Operation-upon your Soul.

2. Implore
his Grace.

The request you may afterwards make to him, is, that he would be pleased to give you the same Respect and Joy (that he gave to *Simeon*) towards that source of all good that you have received ; so that keeping him in your Heart, as *Simeon* held him in his Arms, you may say, Lord now lettest thou thy Servant depart in Peace, &c. and endeavour thence forward to esteem and honour him as such a Favour deserves.

3. Consider
his Dignity.

Consider then in the next place, that he whom you have within you, is the same Son of God, Jesus Christ himself, of whom before the Communion, you conceived such high Things, and to whom you owe all that you are, as well
in

in general as in particular; then render him humble Thanks, for what he is in himself, and for the great Glory he enjoys with his Father and the holy Spirit, above all Angels and all Creatures; and especially for this great Benefit of Communicating and Uniting himself to you.

Lastly, Entreat him that your Communion may not be unprofitable to you, and that he would Work in you all those Virtues that are necessary for your Perfection and the Accomplishment of his holy Will.

4. Beseech him to continue with you.

C H A P. XXXVI.

A Method of daily Examination.

TO the end you may keep a clean Conscience, it will be necessary for you to enter daily into a serious Examination of it, to sweep each corner of it, that all the Filthiness may be cast out. And this ought to be done every Morning as soon as you are up, and at Night just before you go to Bed.

In

Every
Morning do
3 Things.

In your Morning Examination, you may do three Things: First, Thank God for all the Graces and Good he has given you that Night, in preserving you from a thousand Dangers and Snares of the Devil. Secondly, Make a solemn Offering to Jesus Christ of all the Thoughts that shall come into your Mind, all the Words that you shall say, of all the Business and Actions you shall do that day, that he may offer them to God and obtain Grace of him, that they may be all to his greatest Honour and Glory. Thirdly, Raising your Mind to a steady Confidence in the Grace of God, make a firm purpose not to offend him in the least Sin that day, for any thing that may happen to you.

And at
Night: ex-
amine your
self.

And at Night a little before you betake your self to rest, examine your self how well you have stood to your purpose. But before you descend to particulars, consider that you are in the Presence of God, to whom you are now about to give an account of that days

Tran-

Transactions; and endeavour to feel a certain Shame and Confusion in your self, like an ill Servant before an indulgent and kind Master, or a perfidious Subject before a Merciful Prince, who has raised him from the Dunghil to the highest degree of Honour; for how much more reason have you to be ashamed in the sight of God, the King of Kings, and your Sovereign Judge, whom you have served so negligently, and offended so ungratefully?

Begin then with a general Acknowledgment of all the Favours and Marks of his Love that he has shewed you from the time of your Birth to that present moment, and particularly for the Benefits you have that Day received from his Bounty; and call all the Angels and Heavenly Citizens to joyn with you in Praises and Thanksgivings, for the many Graces he has bestowed upon you, particularly for your Creation, Preservation, and Redemption, for his having pardoned you so many Sins, and waited

Begin with a general Acknowledgment of God's Favours;

ed so long for your Conversion, &c. and that you may perform your Exercise the better, when you begin to thank God after this manner, you should rest a little, to Meditate upon some of those Benefits.

The beg
Light and
Grace.

Secondly, Beg, Light and Grace to know your Sins, and see the Defects and Negligences you have that Day been guilty of; and to feel a true Sorrow and Contrition for the same: For they are so many and so secret, that without this Light you will not be able to discern them, and of so hainous a Nature many times, being committed against so good a God, that without his special Assistance you cannot truly judge of them.

3. Descend
to Particu-
lars.

Thirdly, Run over every hour of the Day, and examine with great diligence, what were your Thoughts, Words, Actions and Omissions, that you may perceive in every of them wherein you have particularly offended God.

4. Endeavour to Excite a true Sorrow for your Sins.

Fourthly, Endeavour to Excite in your self a true Sorrow for your Sins, (which is the main intent of this

this Examination) and let this Grief touch your Heart, and be the greatest that may be, because you have been ungrateful to so good a God, rather than for any other inconvenience you may thereby incur; let it proceed, I say, not so much from any fear of Punishment that you have deserved, as from a true Reverence and Esteem that is due from you to the Divine Majesty of God, whom you desire to love and respect above all things: In short, let your Sorrow be greater for having offended God, than if all the Friends you loved in the World were Dead, or the greatest Trouble or Misery that could be, had befallen you.

Fifthly and lastly, Implore his Pardon for your past Sins and Negligences, and his Assistance to amend your Life for the future; promising particularly, and resolving seriously to shun for his Love this or that occasion of Sin, and to lay hold of such or such an occasion, for the correcting and mortifying your self, as you know will be most

5. Implore Pardon for what's past, and Assistance for the future.

most suitable to the Vices or Defects you are corrupted with, or the Virtues you want.

And if you happily find upon a sincere search into your self, that the Sins you have committed that Day are not so grievous as to Excite you to such Shame and Sorrow, refer it all to the Divine Mercy, and not to your own Diligence or Virtue: But reflect upon the Faults of your former Life; and how virtuous soever it might be, yet there will be something or other bad enough in it, that you will have reason to be grieved and confounded at, if you had a true and impartial view of it. And comparing it with the miserable Life of others, you may conclude it is meerly the Grace of God that has prevented and upheld you, otherwise you might have been as bad or worse than they.

Another Method of Examination.

Question your self about 3 Things,
First, Wherein you have that Day
fallen and offended.

Second.

Secondly, what occasioned it.

Thirdly, how diligent you have been in the Practice of Virtue.

Concerning your Fallings, read the 15th Chap. of this Book. Concerning the Occasions, resolve to avoid them for the future. And for the Practice of Virtue, strengthen your Mind with these three Things: Distrust of your self, trust in God, and Prayer; suspect your past Victories, and don't rely upon your former good Works, but rather forget them, lest you fall into Self-Complacency; look always forward upon what you want, and how much work you have yet behind to do: And acknowledging the Grace of God to be the source of all Goodness, thank him for all your Benefits and Blessings; for the Inspirations he has sent you, the good Motions and Desires to Virtue he has given you, for his deliverance from Dangers, and defence against your Enemies.

The Conclusion.

Much more might be said of such important Matters: But let what is here delivered according.

This Book
well pra-
ctised is suf-
ficient:

according to my poor Talent suffice for the present, which if you endeavour to keep in your memory, and practise in your Life and Conversation, will be of sufficient benefit to you.

Above all things, beg incessantly of the Divine Goodness the gift of Perseverance in your unwearied endeavours against your Passions and Imperfections ; it being a very necessary Weapon in this Spiritual Warfare against your never dying Enemies, which like ill Weeds are always shooting and breaking forth so long as the Earth has any Life in it to nourish them.

If you resolve upon the Conquest of your self,

Resolve therefore to betake your self to the Means here proposed, and to fight stoutly, manfully and constantly, since no Man can avoid this Combat, without endangering the loss of the Conquest. Nor is there any hope of Peace with such Enemies, who do those most mischief that desire to make a League and Friendship with them.

And be not terrified at your Enemies Power,

Neither be you discouraged or terrified at their seeming Power and

and Cruelty, since all their force and fury is in the more powerful hands of our supream Captain, who by his Death has triumphed over Death and Hell; for whose Honour you are engaged in this Battle, and wherein none can be overcome but those that will themselves. And if your Lord, under whose Banner you are lifted, does seem sometimes to withdraw his Assistance, and delay the Conquest over your Enemies for a time, yet be not faint-hearted, but fight on couragiously, being most certain and secure that his Goodness, Power and Providence will direct all Events (and more especially all Adversities) to the best advantage of his Soldiers.

These Thoughts will beget in you a generous Spirit, and a constant Heart to resist and fight with Courage; and therefore tho' the Victory comes on slowly, believe firmly that this deferring is either to free your Soul from secret Pride, and conserve you in true Humility; or else to perfect you in Virtue, and to teach you to become a
tried

Tho' the
Victory
comes on
slowly.

tried Soldier by these long continued Conflicts: Or certainly for some other good of your's, which is then concealed from you for your greater Benefit and Improvement.

Go on therefore my dearly Beloved, and enter these Lists with a cheerful and heroick Mind, lest you seem ungrateful to God, who so much tendered your Good, that he suffered Death for your sake: And attend very carefully to every Counsel and Command of your Captain Jesus Christ, that you may totally rout and ruin all your Enemies.

For if you permit but one only to live, and have entertainment in your Soul, it will be as a Mote in your Eye, and as a Beam in your Bowels, and prove a perpetual Impediment in your progress to so Glorious a Victory.

Apoc. 2. 17. To him that overcometh, I will give to eat of the hidden Manna.

F . I N I S .

